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Security Council

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Thursday, 18 March 2010, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet	(Gabon)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2010/127)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2010/127)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan and Poland, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan), took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Le Roy to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Peter Schwaiger, Chargé d'affaires of the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Schwaiger to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/127, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Alain Le Roy. I now give the floor to Mr. Le Roy.

Mr. Le Roy (*spoke in French*): Since the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) a year ago, consensus has been reached on the need to transform the relationship between Afghanistan and its international partners to one that sees greater transition to Afghan responsibility and an increasingly supporting role for the international community. The consensus on this process emerged clearly at the London Conference on Afghanistan of 28 January.

Now, the tangible shift in that relationship must start. Concrete steps must be taken by the international community to allow Afghans to be in charge of and lead the fate of their country while providing the capacity-building and support required for Afghan institutions to take on this role, including in civilian areas. At the same time, the Afghan Government must concretely demonstrate that it can deliver on the accountability required for a real transition process to be sustainable. In that regard, we learned with satisfaction this very morning that President Karzai has signed a decree giving additional power to the High Office for Oversight and Anti-corruption. Clearly, this is a very positive development.

As also noted in the Secretary-General's report now before the Council(S/2010/127), in the midst of heightened military operations, we face a crowded political calendar, including in light of the planned National Assembly elections in September, the Peace Jirga announced by President Karzai in just over a month, and, of course, the Kabul Conference after that. There is a risk that the concept of transition, on which we have collectively agreed to pin our political and

security strategy in Afghanistan, will be overtaken by such events.

Our focus must remain firmly on ensuring that Afghanization actually becomes more than the slogan it has been thus far, and that the political calendar before us is premised upon it, with the Kabul Conference formally marking the concrete and systemic beginning of that process, most importantly in the civilian and political spheres. The United Nations, and UNAMA in particular, are supporting Afghan counterparts — who must be in the lead in developing the event's agenda — in the preparations for the Conference. We would encourage the early formal appointment of a lead ministry in these preparations, which would provide a single counterpart for all those involved. The London Conference has set a strategic path that is clear in reaffirming the international community's long-term commitment to supporting Afghanistan and equally clear in reiterating determination to move towards greater Afghan leadership. We must follow this path with determination now that we are possibly at the height of international engagement in Afghanistan with a Government that is legitimately eager to be in charge of its future. Clearly, not to do so could lead to a failure in our common efforts and strategies. That cannot be an option.

(*spoke in English*)

On 6 March, President Karzai formally requested the Secretary-General to provide technical and logistical support and to help mobilize donor funding for the National Assembly elections, scheduled for September this year. In conformity with that request and if we are mandated to do so, the United Nations and UNAMA stand ready to play a role, alongside the Afghan electoral institutions and other international partners, in supporting the electoral process by providing technical assistance, coordinating other international actors supporting the process, and channelling donor funds. If the transition to Afghan responsibility is to be reflected in that electoral process, it should be clear that the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission are responsible for ensuring its transparency and integrity and should perform their mandates effectively, impartially and with the confidence of all Afghan stakeholders. We stand ready to work, along with others, with the Afghan electoral institutions and the Afghan Government towards that end.

In that respect and with reference to the announcement on 15 March by President Karzai that two internationals will be part of the Electoral Complaints Commission, President Karzai informed Special Representative De Mistura during their first meeting that he would like the United Nations to nominate such international members. That is, of course, a positive development, too.

The upcoming National Assembly elections can be another milestone in highlighting the primacy of the constitutional imperative in leading Afghanistan's future, as well as our agreed common strategy of transitioning to increased Afghan ownership and leadership. On the basis of the commitment on electoral reform agreed with the Afghan Government at the London Conference, we need to collectively support the Government in progressing on that reform agenda for those and future elections. Our focus must not be narrowly on those elections, but rather on longer-term reform.

At the same time, we must be wary of sidelining all other items on the political agenda and of allowing the elections to absorb all or most of the energy and resources of international and Afghan actors alike. On the development side, for example, we must not lose sight of the continuous need to ensure that our common efforts are coordinated and in support of the priorities — the Afghan priorities — that we have long agreed with. Some progress has been made and has been cited before, but sizable parts of Afghan territory and large segments of the population are still underserved; projects are still carried out that are unsustainable or that duplicate what is already being done by others; and, most worryingly, others are still doing what Afghans could be doing. We greatly welcome the appointment of the new NATO Senior Civilian Representative and the new European Union High Representative in Afghanistan. As lead coordinator of international civilian efforts in Afghanistan, Mr. De Mistura will rely on their support and cooperation in furthering UNAMA's role.

At the same time, as we move towards increased Afghan leadership, our collective efforts need to veer towards strengthening Afghanistan's own capacity to coordinate the assistance and aid that it receives, to formulate and spell out its own development priorities

and what is required to address them, and to receive and disburse funding where it identifies the greatest needs.

Politically, we must not underestimate, on the one hand, the importance and, on the other hand, the complexity of initiating a political process of reconciliation and reintegration. With over 70 countries and organizations attending the London Conference, there was an overwhelming consensus on the need for such a process. The Government of Afghanistan committed to developing a peace and reintegration programme and the international community to establishing a peace and reintegration trust fund. UNAMA, with its repository of knowledge and outreach, could play an important role and bring added value to the programme and management of the fund.

Clearly, talk about talks has become more than mere talk, and the rhetoric that peace cannot be achieved by military means alone is being complemented by concrete proposals and a clearer policy. President Karzai's active engagement with neighbours and regional players and convening of the Peace Jirga in April are significant steps in that respect. We should not, however, be under the illusion that the process that has started will lead to immediate results. It will need to be followed and coupled by multiple confidence-building measures on both sides and to be anchored on the common embracing of the progress achieved since 2002. While it is desirable that Afghan and international counterparts maintain a coordinated stance on those initiatives, it is a process that should continue to be Afghan-led.

(*spoke in French*)

As the Security Council will debate the renewal of UNAMA's mandate in the coming days, it should keep in mind that, while 2009 was a difficult year for the United Nations in Afghanistan, the Mission — its staff and its leaders — continued to implement UNAMA's mandate with courage and determination. Following the tragic attack on the Bakhtar guest house in October, some staff had to be relocated owing to the lack of accommodation and office space that met security standards. Despite that, as members know, UNAMA opened two additional field offices in 2009 and, thanks to the Mission's assiduous efforts in constructing new accommodation and strengthening existing premises, all staff initially relocated were ultimately redeployed to Afghanistan by mid-March at the latest.

Thanks to Headquarters support, and through a combination of delegating authority and taking exceptional temporary measures, UNAMA should be able to reduce the post vacancy rate, which increased following the announcement of new posts expected in the budget and the changes in human resources management and the recruitment procedures, to under 30 per cent this summer. A further decrease of the post vacancy rate is expected from now to year's end.

To keep on course at such a critical time for the country and the Mission, Special Representative De Mistura promptly redeployed to Kabul on 13 March, which explains his absence today. He felt it to be important that he reach Kabul as soon as possible. He immediately started a series of fruitful discussions with President Karzai and members of his Government, as well as with other Afghan and international officials, while setting out the Organization's strategy and priorities in the short and medium terms, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it.

We anticipate that the Special Representative will receive the Council's strong support in exercising his duties as coordinator, with the help of his Deputy, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators, and the activities of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Afghanistan. As members know, a new Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs has also been appointed. That is Mr. Kobler, who will deploy to UNAMA in early April.

Headquarters and UNAMA's leaders and staff will continue to work jointly to ensure the mandate's effective implementation for a stronger UNAMA. At the same time, and I stress this, even as we pursue and strengthen our efforts and implement the mandate in the most cost-effective way wherever we are present, without overstretching the available staff and resources, the security requirements of all staff in Afghanistan require a careful assessment of the critical nature of the United Nations operations in Afghanistan, including those of UNAMA. UNAMA's work as an integrated Mission and that of all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes must be continued, sustained and strengthened when necessary, but that must be done by ensuring that the programmes and the staff fulfil duties of the highest priority.

We thank the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for having approved a three-month extension of the special hazard pay for Afghanistan. We will continue to seek the support of the Council, as well as that of relevant budgetary bodies and the ICSC, to ensure that staff posted to non-family duty stations, such as Afghanistan, are compensated, commensurate with other United Nations staff, for their living conditions and the situation on the ground.

An unprecedented level of international attention and resources is invested in Afghanistan, in support of priorities that have been agreed with the Afghan Government and of a strategy of transition to greater responsibility entrusted to Afghans that was also jointly endorsed at the London Conference. We must resolutely work together to take advantage of that occasion and that opportunity to make the difference that that unity of efforts, strategies, priorities and resources allow.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Le Roy for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): As this is the first time I take the floor in the Chamber this month, I should like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Council presidency and to thank you for having convened this meeting. I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2010/127) and Mr. Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing.

Today marks an important step in the partnership between Afghanistan and the international community. For the first time since 2001, we are debating a mandate that focuses on a transition to Afghan ownership, Afghan leadership and Afghan responsibility. This transition is not an end — not an end game — but a new beginning. With dedication, patience and realism, we have the opportunity to put an end to the ongoing violence, to build a State capable of protecting our citizens and meeting their needs, and to strengthen the trust, unity and leadership of the Afghan people.

The Afghan Government has taken up that challenge. In the coming year, our priority will be Afghanization. In every area, Afghans and Afghan priorities should take the lead. We face a busy calendar that will test our strength and resolve, but, with the support of the international community, it can also set us firmly on the path towards success.

The first step is to reverse the Taliban's momentum and improve security across the country. General McChrystal's new strategy, which was recently put to the test in Marjah, will begin to turn the tide. At the same time, the Afghan National Army and Police, with intensive training, equipping and resourcing, will gradually replace the international community in leading the defence of the country and ensuring the security of its people. That handover will begin as soon as possible, and, with the help of the international community, Afghans will bear full responsibility in five years.

The military efforts will be complemented by political and economic efforts. We have the plan and the initial resources for a reintegration programme, and it is beginning to offer an alternative life for many of those fighting against us.

The second step is reconciliation, which has increasingly become the focus in our efforts to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan. In Istanbul and in London, our plans were widely supported by the countries of the region and the international community. Since then, we have engaged with regional partners at a high level to explore ways in which the region could help facilitate reconciliation and to build confidence and trust in new stabilization initiatives.

The cooperation of the region and the unity of international support will be essential, but this process must be Afghan-led and guided by Afghan priorities. In this regard, the next milestone will be the consultative national peace jirga at the end of April, which will bring together Afghan elders, community leaders, Government officials and civil society groups. The conference's agenda will revolve around three goals: first, to have consultations, understanding and agreement among the Afghan people on the need for sustainable peace; secondly, to reach an agreement on a framework for understanding with the opposition; and thirdly, to create a mechanism to pursue that understanding.

However, the security dimension is only the first part of this transition to Afghan ownership. Afghanistan and the international community have already laid out a plan to Afghanize security,

governance and development and to create a stronger framework for regional cooperation. The next step will be in the Kabul conference this summer, where we will move beyond strategy to focus on a detailed plan of implementation.

The Government of Afghanistan is concentrating on building capacity, rooting out corruption, encouraging participation, and promoting justice and the rule of law. We are also working to ensure the long-term sustainability of those changes through developing agriculture, infrastructure and natural resources, regional initiatives and improved coordination. In all of those areas, Afghans will increasingly take the lead, with the support of our partners and friends.

Finally, in September, Afghanistan will hold its parliamentary elections. As in other areas, the elections and the electoral bodies must be driven by Afghans and Afghan priorities. Afghanistan is learning from past experience to undertake short- and long-term electoral reforms to ensure that these and future elections will be transparent, credible and fair.

However, Afghanistan will need time to build the capacity to run an election alone. Therefore President Karzai has sent a letter to the Secretary-General requesting the technical and logistical assistance of the United Nations and has determined that two of the seats on the Electoral Complaints Commission will be occupied by foreign experts. Likewise, the international community's assistance will be necessary in supporting the elections with resources and ensuring they are held in a safe and peaceful environment.

The importance of the central United Nations role in supporting Afghanistan and coordinating international efforts cannot be overstated. Afghans still view the United Nations as an impartial force working for the benefit of the Afghan people and as a guarantor of our stable, peaceful future as a democratic country. Our common mission will require a great deal from all of us: realism about our own abilities and the abilities of our partners, understanding of our different perspectives and the pressures on us, and recognition that we have different timelines and different expectations. Only the United Nations can balance this relationship and ensure that the views of both Afghans and the international community are heard and taken into account.

The Afghan Government fully supports the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and we welcome the appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General of Staffan de Mistura, who arrived in Kabul last weekend to begin his work. We look forward to working closely with him in the months and years ahead.

Nine years ago, Afghanistan was a broken country. The assistance and support of the international community has been a crucial crutch as the country has slowly begun to heal. Afghanistan is eager to stand solidly on its own feet, but we must walk before we can run. It will take time for the Government and security forces to build the capacity to ensure peace and good governance across the country. The continuing commitment of the international community will therefore remain vital in the years to come. But we are on the right path. We have set a clear goal, and, in a strong partnership with the international community, we can succeed.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Afghanistan for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council. I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statement to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2010/127) and Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing. We welcome the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, and wish him success. I welcome the Ambassador of Afghanistan to the Council. We would like to commend the report, which provides a detailed outlook. We agree with its contents and observations.

The speed of developments unfolding regarding Afghanistan did not change in the past months. I therefore wish to emphasize four points: Afghan leadership, the strengthening of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and its mandate, regional cooperation, and a civilian approach.

First, the international community has started to approach the current challenges with a new perspective. This year is critical. The London Conference was an important turning point. The key

term will be "Afghan leadership" in the period ahead. Afghan leadership should be supported by the international community by all means possible. The gap between Afghan and international perceptions should be minimized. There should be a new beginning. We should empower the Afghan Administration. A political process is necessary. The United Nations should have a central role. The parliamentary elections in September 2010 will be part of this process. The new Administration should embrace the whole nation in the period leading up to the elections. It should focus on national unity and reconstruction efforts. It should reach out to all ethnic groups through inclusive policies.

What Afghanistan needs now is the strengthening of democratic values and efficient State mechanisms to combat various problems, including misconduct. A comprehensive approach is needed. It should include security, governance, the rule of law, human rights and social and economic development. It should not be limited only to military means. Four areas need special attention: comprehensive economic development; a strong, well-trained and equipped Afghan military and police; inclusive national reconciliation; and modern education and justice systems that can effectively combat extremism.

Secondly, this comprehensive approach is directly linked to a strong United Nations. The role of UNAMA should be strengthened in order to better serve the Afghan people. For that reason, we are trying to incorporate the needs of the United Nations into the current negotiations on UNAMA's new mandate. As the lead country in the Council, Turkey hopes to reach consensus and finalize the discussions on the UNAMA mandate renewal after this debate so that it can be adopted next Monday. On the other hand, we all need to help the United Nations address its security requirements. The continuation of a strong United Nations presence is of the utmost importance, not only in the coming transition period but even beyond. We should therefore all support the Secretary-General in his efforts to that end.

Thirdly, regional cooperation and dialogue should be enhanced. Turkey hosted the fourth Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit in January, with a focus on education. We also hosted the Istanbul Summit with the participation of Afghanistan's neighbours. The Istanbul Statement is the first declaration of the region since the Kabul Declaration of 2002 to emphasize regional ownership. We believe it provides a solid basis for enhancing regional cooperation. Regional cooperation was also discussed at the London Conference. On another note, Turkey will also host the fourth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan in Turkey this year.

Fourthly, we would like to stress the importance of strengthening civilian efforts in the period ahead. The transfer of responsibilities to Afghan authorities should not be understood as an exit strategy. On the contrary, the international community should increase its civilian presence. In that context, we would especially like to draw attention to the relevant section of the Secretary-General's report on the situation in areas where stability is fragile due to the inequitable distribution of development aid. We will continue our efforts to fill that gap.

I would like to inform the Council that at the provincial reconstruction team (PRT) conference held in Kabul two days ago, Turkey announced the establishment of a new Turkish PRT in Sibirgan, the provincial capital of Cevizcan, at the request of the Afghan Government. Our new PRT will also cover Saripul province. We have already completed our domestic legislative requirements and appointed a senior diplomat as PRT leader. A site survey was conducted last week. We plan to reach operational capability in May. The Turkish civilian—led PRT will base itself on the successful experience of our first PRT in Wardak province. It will assume responsibility for health, education and development efforts in close coordination with Afghan authorities. It will bring additional civilian capacity to those two provinces and complement the ongoing development efforts in the region. It will also be ready to assist Afghan capacity-building efforts in the area of security by training the Afghan National Police.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that, in addition to our diplomatic efforts, Turkey will continue its comprehensive contributions in Afghanistan in cooperation with the United Nations.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his introduction of the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/127). I should also like to thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan,

for his statement today. I would also like to wish Ambassador Staffan de Mistura every success in his new responsibilities as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan.

This debate and the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in a few days' time demonstrate the commitment of the international community to bringing about the reconstruction of that country and to ensuring that the people of Afghanistan regain full control of their destiny, as agreed at the International Conference on Afghanistan held London on 28 January.

The support that we can provide in this new transition phase emerging from the London Conference is very important, as UNAMA continues to coordinate international efforts aimed at ensuring that the Afghan Government is adequately empowered to discharge fully its responsibilities for security, development, national reconciliation and regional cooperation. We trust that during the next international conference, which is to be held in the spring in Kabul, the Government of Afghanistan will put forward specific measures that will help strengthen the country's institutions and the rule of law, in particular by combating corruption and impunity.

My delegation concurs with the report of the Secretary-General to the effect that, during the new stage that has emerged through renewed international momentum, UNAMA must intensify its efforts to implement its mandate while focusing on three main areas. First, it must support the Government's capacity to coordinate with the international community. Secondly, in the area of elections, is must provide support politically and to institutions by means of the Independent Electoral Commission, specifically to strengthen national capacities. And, thirdly, it must continue to exercise its good offices to support the implementation of Afghan reconciliation programmes. All that must be led by the Afghan Government itself and be in line with its national priorities.

With regard to security, we regret the fact that, once again, the Secretary-General's report tells of an increase in violent incidents over the figures for previous years. The year 2009 marked the greatest losses of civilian lives since 2001. There is no denying that these statistics reveal that insecurity continues to be the main factor hampering progress in Afghanistan. In that regard, we believe that continued civilian oversight of international forces must remain a crucial condition to completing the efforts they have undertaken.

We also reiterate our total repudiation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We condemn any attack against civilians, humanitarian and United Nations personnel and journalists. We trust that communication and coordination between the representative of the Secretary-General, Afghan forces and the International Security Assistance Force will lead to a reduction in civilian loss of life and an improvement in the country's security.

We also recognize that the peace and reintegration programme that has been announced by President Karzai to promote the reintegration into society of anti-Government elements desiring to lay down their weapons heralds a message of reconciliation and dialogue, which is so necessary given the country's circumstances. However, that must be carefully considered to ensure that all guarantees necessary for the country's development are successfully fulfilled.

We commend the joint initiatives undertaken, in particular, by the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan to combat the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs in the region. Through this focus on shared responsibility, they will contribute to generating mutual confidence and promoting joint strategies to combat the scourge, and will certainly have a direct impact on the security situation in the region.

Given the promulgation of the law on public amnesty and national stability to pardon the perpetrators of serious crimes, including serious violations of human rights, we emphasize that the fight against impunity has a fundamental role in national reconciliation, as does the observation of pertinent international law. We also believe that it is of primary importance to address the needs of the roughly 296,000 internally displaced persons and that they be given the opportunity to return to their places of origin in an atmosphere of reconciliation and full respect for their fundamental human rights.

Lastly, with respect to elections, it is important to endeavour to apply all the lessons learned during the presidential elections of August 2009 in order to ensure the credibility and transparency of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. To this end, we would urge,

first, the appointment of a new Electoral Complaints Commission; secondly, the adoption of measures to assert the independence of the Independent Election Commission; thirdly, the launch of an investigation, pursuant to Afghan electoral law, of alleged fraud in the most recent elections; and fourthly, the guaranteed participation of women and minorities.

We fully believe that the elections scheduled for the second part of the year will provide a new opportunity for the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, to reinforce its commitment to the priorities of the country and to its people.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his presentation and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his remarks. We wish the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, every success.

Since our latest debate on Afghanistan (see S/PV.6255), important steps have been taken to review and enhance the relationship between Afghanistan and the international community. The Istanbul and London conferences helped translate the word "Afghanization" into clear commitments. The months ahead of us, with the Peace Jirga, the Kabul conference and the September parliamentary elections, will provide an occasion for all stakeholders to implement such commitments.

Today, I would like to address three aspects of the situation concerning Afghanistan and the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA): the security situation, the political process, including elections and reconciliation, and aid coordination.

The fact that 2009 was the most violent year in Afghanistan since 2001 is a matter of serious concern. The current international military surge is taking place in a very volatile environment, where clearing areas of militants is not the hardest task when compared to the daunting job of laying the foundations for long-term stability.

Afghan civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. The vast majority of them are victims of Al-Qaida, the Taliban and armed opposition groups. We welcome the efforts of pro-Government forces in 2009 that led to a reduction in the number of civilian deaths caused by such forces. We are confident that more will be done to further reduce such casualties.

As is widely recognized, the ultimate solution to the Afghan conflict will not be found on the battlefield, but through a political process. The London communiqué showed strong international support for the reconciliation and reintegration policy announced by President Karzai in his inauguration address. Such a process must surely be led by Afghanistan. UNAMA can play a role, if and as requested by Kabul.

Progress in national reconciliation should go hand in hand with progress in consolidating democracy. To that end, it is necessary to create conditions to ensure that the difficulties during last year's elections do not recur in the upcoming parliamentary elections and beyond. It is natural and desirable that the Afghan authorities progressively should regain full leadership of the electoral and democratic process. In so doing, they must ensure free, fair and credible elections.

Stability also depends on the ability of the Afghan Government, with the support of the international community, to deliver socio-economic development. The strategy to enhance governance and provide development aid to liberated areas is therefore wise. All efforts must be made to fully implement that strategy.

The importance of coordinating international assistance to Afghanistan and UNAMA's role in such coordination has been stressed time and again. Some progress has been made in this area, but much more remains to be done. A strong political will is needed in donor countries to allow for their collective assistance to be coordinated by the United Nations and the Afghan Government. It may not be easy, but it is indispensable, including to ensuring their effectiveness.

Just as importantly, UNAMA's mandate as the primary coordinator of international civilian efforts in Afghanistan should be discharged in a way that builds the capacity of Afghan institutions and promotes social and economic development. It is worrying in this regard that a significant portion of the international aid to Afghanistan has not even been brought to the attention of the Afghan Government, let alone aligned with the Afghan National Development Strategy. It is also troubling that the aid remains geographically imbalanced. If this situation persists, it may undermine the recent progress made by the Afghan authorities to

refocus the Afghan National Development Strategy and to improve revenue collection and economic growth.

The second half of 2009 highlighted the outstanding challenges to building a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. At the end of last year and the beginning of 2010, the focus was on reorienting strategies and expressing commitments to address those challenges. Let us hope that the months ahead will bring such efforts to fruition.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his briefing on the situation in Afghanistan. China expresses its readiness to fully support the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and of the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, who has already taken up his duties in Afghanistan.

Last year, Afghanistan successfully held presidential elections, representing a major step forward towards governance by the Afghan people of their country. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Afghan Government and the international community, positive results were achieved at the international conferences on Afghanistan in Istanbul and London earlier this year. Now that Afghanistan has entered a critical transition phase, the international community should remain focused on that country, increase support and assistance, and lay the groundwork for full transition to governance by the Afghan people through the enhancement of Afghanistan's sovereignty, autonomy and capacity for development.

The turbulent security situation is a prominent challenge to Afghanistan's reconstruction. Integrated approaches should be adopted to improve the security situation there. While working to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan army and police, the international community must also further advance the process of national reconciliation led by the Afghan Government so as to consolidate and expand the political basis for achieving peace and stability. The transfer of security responsibilities to the Afghan Government should be carried out in a progressive, prudent and well-planned way under the precondition of ensuring the security and stability of the country.

The key to the long-term security and stability of Afghanistan lies in the development of its economy and the improvement of people's lives. The further implementation of the Afghan National Development Strategy has led to a recovery of its agriculture, an increase in foreign investment, the rapid growth of its economy and the steady rise of Government revenue. The international community should further increase support for the implementation of the National Development Strategy so that more Afghans can benefit from the development dividend. Donors and relevant international agencies should respect the autonomy of Afghanistan in economic reconstruction and encourage the enthusiasm and initiative of the Afghan Government and people.

We support the country by providing more assistance to the Afghan Government in order to enhance its capacity for self-development. We support the United Nations continued leading and coordinating role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We highly appreciate the outstanding performance of UNAMA in fulfilling its mission under extremely difficult conditions, and support the extension of its mandate for another year.

The parliamentary elections in Afghanistan are scheduled to take place in September, and we hope that they will be held successfully. We support UNAMA's provision of necessary electoral assistance in accordance with its mandate.

As a friendly neighbour of Afghanistan, China has actively supported, participated in and promoted the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan. China has already invited President Karzai to visit China from 21 to 25 March 2010. I believe that this visit will achieve positive results.

In the future, China will continue to support Afghanistan within the limits of its capabilities. We believe that, with the energetic support of the international community and through their own efforts, the Afghan Government and people will eventually reach the goal of peace and stability, independence and self-reliance, development and progress, and friendship and good relations with its neighbours.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his briefing. Let me also welcome the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, to this table and thank him for his important contribution.

Austria aligns itself with the statement to be made later in this debate by the representative of the European Union.

The London Conference has initiated a new phase of transition to greater Afghan leadership and responsibility. It has also set the agenda for the Kabul conference in June, which is expected to focus on a reform-oriented nation-building agenda. We agree with the Secretary-General's view that, in this process of transition, it is essential to take into account the concerns of the Afghans. In this spirit, Austria and the Liechtenstein Institute at Princeton University organized the Afghanistan Implementation Colloquium in Austria at the end of February, which brought together a significant number of Afghans and international experts. We believe that the results of those discussions can prove useful in the preparation of the Kabul conference, and we will share them with partners.

As to the parliamentary elections to be held in September, effective electoral reform, building on the commitments made at the London Conference, will be critical to ensuring that the elections can contribute to the consolidation of democracy in Afghanistan. We also hope that measures to facilitate the participation of women and minorities, both as candidates and voters, will be put in place.

We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to accelerate the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan and to foster the process of integrating women into political, economic and social life.

Following President Karzai's inauguration speech of November and the London Conference, the concepts of reintegration and reconciliation have moved to the forefront of attention. There is no purely military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. We believe that both reintegration and reconciliation should be fully Afghan-led and must respect the Constitution as well as international commitments. Furthermore, broad involvement by and consensus among all relevant stakeholders of the Afghan political system will be critical. Women's participation in the reconciliation process — in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) — will be of particular importance for achieving sustainable peace. We therefore hope that the national Peace Jirga scheduled for the end of April will be prepared in a transparent and inclusive manner, engaging all relevant segments of Afghan society. Any genuine reconciliation process will have to be complemented by accountability for serious crimes of the past.

As the Secretary-General has pointed out, the Security Council's recent decision to remove five former Taliban officials from the list established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1267 (1999) was welcomed in Afghanistan as a confidence-building measure and can help lay the foundations for an eventual political process. We take note of the Secretary-General's evaluation that further confidence-building measures would be useful. In this context, as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), I look forward to cooperating with the Afghan authorities and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in ensuring the full implementation of resolutions 1267 (1999), 1822 (2008) and 1904 (2009), including in the framework of the ongoing efforts to update the consolidated list and, more specifically, through the current review process.

The negative impact of the security situation on the protection of civilians remains a major challenge. The fact that last year saw the highest number of civilian casualties since 2001 is deeply worrying, with the Taliban and other extremist groups being responsible for, by far, the greatest number of civilian deaths. At the same time, we wish to welcome the progress made by the International Security Assistance Force and other international forces in significantly reducing the number of civilian casualties in the context of their operations, and hope that these efforts will be further pursued.

We believe that regional cooperation will be crucial to the stability and prosperity of Afghanistan. All of Afghanistan's neighbours ought to be included and take part in this process. We would like to encourage intensified confidence-building and cooperation in economic and political terms, as well as mutual assistance in the fight against drugs, terrorism and criminality. We are pleased to see UNAMA provide support to such regional cooperation in accordance with its mandate.

Austria also appreciates the activities undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to facilitate regional cooperation, such as the Paris Pact Initiative, the Rainbow Strategy, and the development

of regional programmes for Afghanistan and its neighbours.

In view of the challenges ahead for Afghanistan during the coming months, we are convinced that UNAMA will continue to play a key role in support of the Government. We therefore support the extension of UNAMA's mandate for another 12 months, with the modifications suggested by the Secretary-General in order to increase the effectiveness and impact of the Mission's work. Austria is looking forward to working with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and wishes him every success in his important and challenging tasks.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): The representative of the European Union will shortly make a statement, with which France aligns itself. Allow me to add a few complementary observations.

After a difficult 2009, the first few months of 2010 have given us some reason to hope for an improvement in the situation. Afghanistan and the international community agreed on a credible road map at the London Conference, based on an accelerated undertaking by Afghans of their sovereign responsibilities. The commitments undertaken by President Karzai and his Government on an ambitious reform programme and the announcement of a reconciliation and reintegration process provide a solid foundation for that transition. In terms of military issues, the new strategy developed by General McChrystal is beginning to bear fruit and is highlighting the weaknesses of the armed rebellion, which does not enjoy the support of the people. Finally, at the regional level, more positive dynamics between Afghanistan and its neighbours have made the fight against terrorism more effective.

However, these developments are still fragile. In order to consolidate the prospects for recovery, it is essential to quickly implement the reform plans that President Karzai announced to enable Afghan institutions to fully take on their new responsibilities.

The United Nations has the legitimacy, impartiality and expertise that make it an essential actor in this new phase. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has a key role to play. We welcome the appointment of Mr. De Mistura at the head of UNAMA. We have full confidence in his ability to take on the role of representative of the entire international community to the Afghan people in an effective and dynamic manner. In so doing, he can rely on the new special representative of the European Union and the new NATO civilian representative. Their strengthened competencies will help make the international efforts in support of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General more coherent.

We expect the United Nations to actively support the transition process undertaken in London. In this respect, the mandate renewal provides us with an opportunity to spell out the priorities of the mission. We see three priorities.

First, political good offices are the cornerstone of the mandate. The Special Representative must, in particular, pursue continued dialogue with President Karzai and the other political stakeholders regarding the implementation of the mutual commitments undertaken in London. In this respect, the initial contacts established between the Special Representative and President Karzai are encouraging. UNAMA will also have an active role to play in supporting the Government in its reconciliation and reintegration programme. That programme will need to be implemented within the framework of the Constitution and in strict observance of democratic values and norms.

Secondly, UNAMA will also have to commit itself to supporting the electoral process. Lessons must be learned from the problems that faced the presidential elections. Reforms are needed before the September parliamentary elections. The legitimacy of the efforts by the Afghan Government and the international community requires that these elections be held under the best possible conditions. The Special Representative will have an important role to play in forging a consensus between the Government and the major Afghan political stakeholders, including opposition leaders, on all of these reforms.

Thirdly, UNAMA must pursue the efforts it has undertaken since the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan, held in Paris in June 2008, to reinforce the efficiency and consistency of aid. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/127), this role must more clearly support the Afghan authorities, who have the primary responsibility for coordinating aid.

France would like to thank Turkey for the draft resolution presented to Security Council members, which fully reflects its priorities.

The crisis in Afghanistan cannot be addressed independently from the crisis in the region, primarily in Pakistan. The Pakistani Government is courageously combating the scourge of terrorism. The international community must support it and encourage it to strengthen its efforts against all terrorist groups.

In addition, regional dialogue and cooperation must receive increased attention. Important initiatives have recently been taken in this regard. France welcomes in particular the lead role played by Turkey. To go further, we would like to see a mechanism established dedicated to follow-up to and promotion of regional dialogue. The United Nations, given its impartiality, is well placed to bring together all the regional actors to achieve the common objective of stability in the region. We urge UNAMA to become actively involved in that area.

In conclusion, I wish to recall an essential point. The transition period under way in Afghanistan does not mean a withdrawal of the international community, much less an abandonment. In any case, as President Sarkozy has several times reiterated, France will remain committed as long as necessary and as long as Afghans want us to be.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his important remarks and his leadership here.

Allow me to start by underscoring the full support of the United States for the critical role of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We are deeply grateful to the dedicated men and women of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and of the many United Nations agencies, who have demonstrated their deep commitment to helping the Afghan people achieve stability and develop democratic institutions in the face of enormous challenges.

Two months ago in London, the international community demonstrated its support for the Afghan Government's agenda, as outlined by President Karzai in his inaugural address. Underlying our commitment is the recognition that Afghanistan and the international community are entering into a new phase of partnership on the way to full Afghan ownership. To ensure that the efforts of the international community are effective, the United Nations will have to continue to play a key role in promoting coordination and unity of effort.

The United States very much welcomes the appointment of Special Representative Staffan de Mistura and reiterates its strong support for him and UNAMA as he takes up his important assignment. We look forward to working closely with the new Special Representative to achieve our shared goal of assisting the people of Afghanistan to transform and strengthen their own society and ensure their own security. Upon his arrival, Special Representative De Mistura committed UNAMA to work to

> "assist both the stability and socioeconomic improvement of the Afghan people, remembering it should be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned, with total respect for their own sovereignty and independence".

We agree with that commitment, and we look forward to supporting UNAMA in its work.

We also look forward to seeing UNAMA take a re-energized, central role in coordinating humanitarian assistance among the United Nations agencies and in coordinating assistance among the donor Governments through improved mechanisms and increased staffing. For our part, the United States will continue to work to improve its coordination with the United Nations and other donors, and we would welcome steps by others to do the same. We believe that UNAMA will work closely with the Government of Afghanistan to ensure that this assistance supports the Government's agenda and priorities and builds government capacity at all levels.

The international community is committed to strengthening the Afghan Government's capacity and supporting its goal of taking responsibility for its own development, governance and security priorities. United States civilian officials are partnering with Afghans to develop and implement governance, economic development, rule of law and agricultural initiatives. UNAMA has a continued critical role to play in the process of transitioning towards greater responsibility for the Afghan Government, including helping to develop provincial benchmarks on development, governance and the rule of law as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan Government make provincial transition decisions.

The Afghan Government has announced plans for a transition to Afghan-led security responsibility. We are already making progress together on that front. Current ISAF operations in Helmand province, conducted at the request of the Afghan Government and the province's governor, have been conducted with an unprecedented degree of Afghan planning and leadership. Key Afghan security and service-delivery ministries in Kabul, and their subordinate departments in Helmand, have worked to ensure that governance and development efforts immediately follow security operations. The Afghan Government installed a deputy district governor for Marjah and his team on 23 February, just 10 days after security operations were launched. Kabul continues to staff up critical positions in service-delivery ministries to help roll out essential services.

But the real test will be the Afghan Government's ability to meet the expectations of the local population. We are determined to help the Afghan authorities succeed. As security improves and the Afghan Government assumes greater security responsibilities, the United States stands ready to support Afghan-led initiatives to stabilize local areas by providing a path for insurgent commanders and fighters to leave the battlefield. As President Obama has said, "We will support efforts by the Afghan Government to open the door to those Taliban who abandon violence and respect the human rights of their fellow citizens".

We urge the United Nations to continue to play a strong role in ensuring the involvement of women in every stage of that process and in working with the Afghan Government to ensure that women's rights and human rights are preserved and promoted.

Finally, the Afghan Government's announcement of national legislative elections later this year presents another opportunity to improve governance and strengthen institutions. However, we remain concerned about the electoral decree issued by the President in February. It is vital that the Afghan people be able to have faith in the credibility and legitimacy of the 2010 legislative elections. Thus, the independence and credibility of Afghanistan's electoral institutions are of paramount importance. For example, the Electoral Complaints Commission will be enhanced if its members, both Afghan and foreign, are able to conduct their activities in an impartial and independent manner.

We welcome the Afghan Government's commitments to ensuring the integrity of the 2010 parliamentary elections and to working closely with the United Nations to build on the lessons learned from the 2009 elections in order to deliver improvements to the electoral process in 2010 and beyond. Demonstrable progress in establishing independent and effective electoral institutions will be key to sustaining confidence in the upcoming election and its results. Our own ability to provide assistance through the elections cycle will depend significantly on progress in establishing more effective and honest governance.

The commitment we share with the Government of Afghanistan, which was expressed most recently in London, provides renewed direction for our efforts. The Government's plan to host an international conference in Kabul later this year will enable us to hear its detailed action plans and its targets for implementing its agenda.

This will be a critical year for Afghanistan. We look forward to strengthening our common efforts.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing, as well as to Ambassador Tanin for his remarks. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the current situation in Afghanistan (S/2010/127). We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Mr. Staffan de Mistura as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. We wish him every success in his work.

Bosnia and Herzegovina also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union.

In the light of the latest key developments in Afghanistan and the various important challenges that the international community and Afghan authorities will face in the near future, Bosnia and Herzegovina commends the high level of intensity in recent diplomatic activities aimed at helping Afghanistan and its institutions. Our delegation therefore appreciates the organization and outcomes of the Conference on Afghanistan held in London on 28 January. Bearing in mind the importance of regional cooperation for the achievement of the long-term goal of a stable and democratic Afghanistan, we also emphasize the significance of the summit on the theme "Friendship and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia", which was held

in Istanbul on 26 January. We also look forward to the conference in Kabul scheduled for spring. That conference is a very encouraging sign, as it will be the first high-level meeting hosted by the Afghan Government.

At the outset, Bosnia and Herzegovina would like to emphasize its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, as well as its support for all of Afghanistan's efforts aimed at rebuilding the country and achieving sustainable peace and constitutional democracy. We expect that the United Nations will continue to play a central and impartial coordinating role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, jointly with the Government, in order to implement the Afghanistan Compact.

However, we are deeply concerned about the humanitarian and security situation in the country. We condemn the increased attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers and Afghan and international forces.

Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that current efforts to promote and establish the process of democratic transformation in Afghanistan deserve strong support from the international community. In that regard, we are convinced that several issues are of fundamental importance.

First, it is evident that the organization of parliamentary elections in September will be a great challenge, not only for Afghan institutions but also for the international community. We strongly encourage the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to provide overall political coordination of the international support for the elections. The elections should not lead us to forget the necessity of future long-term electoral reform. We endorse the efforts of the United Nations to continue to assist the Afghan Government in that essential work. In order to have an independent, impartial and credible electoral process, it continues to be important to facilitate and encourage the cooperation of the international community and Afghan authorities to ensure a conducive environment for the upcoming elections.

Bosnia and Herzegovina would also like to underscore the crucial importance of the roles of the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission. We are convinced that they play fundamental roles in the electoral process in Afghanistan, and thus we stress the importance of safeguarding their independence and transparency.

We consider the participation of all segments of Afghan society in those elections to be of great importance for the democratic transformation of the country. We strongly support the measures aimed at improving the participation of women and minorities. We also welcome the efforts made to accelerate the implementation of the national plan for women. Our delegation encourages the Afghan Government's continuing efforts in that direction, as we believe that women's participation can only bolster the Government's capacity to find solutions to numerous challenges that Afghan society will have to deal with in the future.

Secondly, Bosnia and Herzegovina attaches great importance to UNAMA's role in providing good offices to the Afghan Government, in particular in the area of reconciliation. We believe that there is no alternative to the dialogue between the Afghan Government and opposition forces. In that regard, we support the reintegration process and commend the proposal to establish a donor-funded peace and reintegration trust fund that would provide employment and financial incentives for insurgents who wish to renounce violence. We believe that such instruments are of crucial importance to future social and political cohesion within Afghan society.

Thirdly, our delegation recognizes the importance and necessity of the leading role of UNAMA in coordinating international humanitarian aid. At the same time, we encourage UNAMA to include and consult Afghans and to work through Afghan institutions in the implementation of projects. We would like to see the Afghan Government play a greater coordinating role, as that is one of the pragmatic and concrete ways to support the process of transition to Afghan leadership.

Fourthly, Bosnia and Herzegovina firmly supports the return of internally displaced persons in Afghanistan. We would like to express our concern about the estimated 296,000 such people, as indicated in the latest report of the Secretary-General. Our own experience in the post-war period allows us to insist that these returns are essential to building a democratic society and to re-establishing a climate of security and confidence among citizens. We welcome all efforts made in this direction.

We would also like to encourage the Government of Afghanistan to continue with its positive achievements in the implementation of the mine action programme, with the support of the United Nation and all relevant actors.

We believe that the aforementioned activities and commitments constitute important steps towards the new transition phase emphasized and announced in the London communiqué and aimed at encouraging Afghan-led leadership and ownership in different areas.

Finally, Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the renewal of the UNAMA's mandate for an additional 12 months.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2010/127) and Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing this morning. I should also like to welcome the positive remarks made by Ambassador Tanin.

The report of the Secretary-General outlines clearly the progress made towards Afghanistan's becoming a secure, stable and prosperous nation. We remain firmly committed to this goal. But the report also sets out the scale of the challenges that remain.

As this is the first time the Council has formally discussed Afghanistan since his appointment, let me like others welcome Staffan de Mistura as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. He has the United Kingdom's full support. We encourage him to maximize his time on the ground in Afghanistan in order to strengthen the United Nations leadership. We welcome the progress already made in filling vacant posts in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and stand ready to support further recruitment efforts.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the appointments of the NATO Senior Civilian Representative and the European Union's Special Representative. Working with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, they will help to ensure that civilian delivery in Afghanistan amounts to more than the sum of its individual parts.

The London Conference in January marked an important step. The Afghan Government, the United Nations and the international community agreed a common set of principles reflecting the ambitions that President Karzai outlined in his inauguration speech last year. These priorities renewed the international community's commitment to Afghanistan and its people, and recognized a new phase towards greater Afghan leadership. These priorities will be reflected in UNAMA's renewed mandate next week.

The international community and President Karzai's Government now need to deliver on the commitments we collectively made in London, particularly in three priority areas. The first is security. As the Secretary-General's report sets out, the past three months have presented major security challenges, but the progress we have made is real. Operation Moshtarak shows the increasing role that Afghanistan is playing in strengthening its own security. We welcome the considerable efforts made by the International Security Assistance Force and Afghan forces in minimizing civilian casualties — a fall of some 28 per cent over the past year. We are working towards the day when foreign troops are no longer needed on the front line in Afghanistan, and when Afghanistan can stand up by itself to the threat posed by terrorism.

Second is the political process. Developing an Afghan-led political settlement remains a critical task for 2010. Both the forthcoming Peace Jirga and the Kabul conference are central to that effort. We support the Afghan Government in its endeavour to develop a representative reconciliation process. As my Foreign Minister said last week, the Afghans must own, lead and drive such political engagement. It will be a slow, gradual process. And to support that Afghan-led political process, and at the request of the Government, we envisage an important role for UNAMA and the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Third are elections. UNAMA will have an important role in helping the Afghan Government to prepare for the forthcoming legislative elections. We hope that all efforts will be made by the Government to ensure that they are transparent, credible and safe. We reaffirm our support for the Government's commitment in the London communiqué to preventing any irregularity and misconduct. It is important for the credibility of the election that both the Afghan Electoral Complaints Commission and the Independent Election Commission be genuinely independent so that they can provide the proper checks and balances required by the Constitution. We therefore welcome

President Karzai's commitment to appointing two internationals to the Electoral Complaints Commission, and we look forward to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General making those appointments shortly.

We agree with the analysis in the Secretary-General's report of the presidential elections last year. A number of lessons need to be learned, and we recognize the challenges in delivering credible elections this coming September. We note the commitment in the London communiqué that the Afghan Government will work closely with the United Nations to deliver improvements in all future electoral processes, and we look forward to the Government outlining and implementing electoral reforms without delay.

Tackling corruption must remain a top priority for the Afghan Government and for international partners. As the Secretary-General's report highlights, corruption is currently an even greater priority for Afghans than security. Corruption hampers socio-economic development and undermines the legitimacy of the Government and its ability to deliver services to the Afghan people. At the London Conference, President Karzai committed to tackling corruption and to building independent institutions to drive and monitor progress. We therefore welcome Mr. Le Roy's confirmation that President Karzai today enacted legislation establishing the High Office for Oversight and Anti-corruption. Improving anti-corruption efforts will build the confidence of donors to channel an increasing percentage of development funds directly through Afghan ministries.

Finally, we look forward to the Kabul conference later this year. That event will maintain momentum in building a political strategy in Afghanistan and will enable the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, to articulate how it will implement the commitments made in January. Afghanistan and the United Nations have the United Kingdom's full support.

Mr. Mugoya (Uganda): I would like to start by thanking Mr. Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his remarks.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/127) highlights some important areas of progress in international and Afghan efforts over the past three months, but it also recognizes that much more remains to be achieved with the proper management of the important events that will take place in the next few months.

We strongly support the overall effort made during the reporting period to improve governance, the rule of law, the fight against corruption and impunity, and respect for human rights in Afghanistan. Building strong institutions remains critical to that effort, and it is the responsibility of the new Afghan Government to demonstrate leadership on these national priorities.

Significant reforms to the electoral system are necessary if future elections are to be more transparent and accountable. In this regard, the postponement of the parliamentary elections to 18 September offers a window of opportunity for electoral reform that will further contribute to the consolidation of democracy in Afghanistan.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains of major concern to the international community. We note with great concern that the situation worsened during the reporting period as a result of a combination of factors. We are encouraged, however, by the efforts to reinforce security arrangements in the main cities, as well as by ongoing security operations that have resulted in a significant decrease in suicide attacks.

Of additional concern beyond the loss of life and serious injuries is the mine contamination that has hampered livelihood activities, including access to agricultural land, water, health care and education. While we note the achievements to date in the implementation of the mine-action programme, we encourage the Government, with the support of the international community, to increase resources for addressing the impact on the population of mines and explosive remnants of war. We urge the early completion of the development of the National Security Strategy, followed by its immediate implementation, in line with the objective of transferring security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces within five years.

We recognize that the primary responsibility for the development of the country lies with the Afghan Government and the people themselves, but we call on the international community to continue to promote and strengthen Afghan ownership by increasing efforts to enhance the Afghans' capacity to take the lead on key priorities that are critical in moving the country

forward. We agree with the Secretary-General that that requires a good balance between military and civilian efforts. Increased efforts must be made to establish a reinforced and dedicated civilian coordination structure that ensures strong Afghan ownership and the involvement of all major stakeholders in Afghanistan.

We welcome the continued commitment of the international community to supporting the stability and development of Afghanistan, in particular the London Conference communiqué, which set a clear agenda and good priorities for the way forward on Afghanistan. The consensus generated on Afghan-led reconciliation and reintegration is very significant and is also critical to sustainable peace in Afghanistan and the entire region.

Stability, security and development in Afghanistan are closely linked to the overall situation in the region. A coordinated approach at the regional level and enhanced cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours are essential in dealing with the common challenges that cut across national borders, while they also generate momentum for economic growth.

The fight against insurgency, and the trade in narcotics in particular, can be greatly boosted by joint efforts at the regional level. We take note of the recent progress in addressing opium production, but we remain concerned at the serious harm that opium cultivation, production and trafficking continue to cause to the security, development and governance of Afghanistan, as well as the region and internationally. We call on the Afghan Government to accelerate, with the assistance of the international community, the implementation of the National Drug Control Strategy.

We note with appreciation the ongoing efforts by the Secretary-General, his newly appointed Special Representative for Afghanistan and, in particular, the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), who are serving in very difficult conditions to lead the efforts of the international community. We therefore support the Secretary-General's call for the renewal of UNAMA's mandate for an additional period of 12 months.

As the Secretary-General has noted, the next few months will be complex and very critical for Afghanistan's future stability and progress. The positive momentum that has emerged in spite of the difficult security situation must be maintained. The increased support of the international community is essential to maintain that momentum.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to convey my gratitude to the Secretariat for the report that Under-Secretary-General Le Roy has just presented on the work undertaken by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (S/2010/127), and to thank Ambassador Tanin for his statement. Allow me, Mr. President, to make the following comments.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Staffan de Mistura as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and we support the renewal of UNAMA's mandate for another year, with it adapting its functions to the new challenges. We affirm the importance of the United Nations playing a leading role in coordinating international assistance for Afghanistan, aimed at strengthening its sovereignty and independence.

It is essential that the Afghan Government play a leading role in the security, political and economic fields, and that the United Nations Mission play an assisting and supporting role so as to enable the people of Afghanistan to increasingly ensure their future. We call for stronger coordination between UNAMA and the other international actors present in Afghanistan.

At this time it is important to promote international and regional support in order to help Afghanistan achieve stability and prosperity. In that context, we welcome the high-level conference on Afghanistan, organized by Turkey in Istanbul on 26 January 2010, and the outcome of the London Conference of 28 January 2010, in which 78 States and institutions participated. We hope that the Kabul conference scheduled for later this year will also be a success. At that conference, the Afghan Government is to present tangible plans and programmes.

We support the certification of the provincial council elections and the parliamentary elections, which are scheduled to be held on 18 September of this year. We hope they will be transparent, free and credible. Before then, electoral reform is necessary, in particular with regard to the establishment of a credible independent election commission and the lessons that need to be learned from the earlier presidential elections. We must also identify the assistance that the United Nations Mission can provide in that regard.

Afghan military, civilian and judicial institution-building must be completed, and we must fight impunity and corruption. Women's rights must be promoted, and the Afghan army and police must be strengthened in order to ensure that they can fully assume their security functions.

We underscore the complementary nature of security and development, and in that regard parallel efforts must be undertaken to address the underlying causes of that conflict. We should foster an internal political process and reconciliation with anti-Government elements, as long as they renounce violence and respect the Constitution and all institutions established since 2002.

We are concerned about the increasing security tensions and terrorist attacks against Afghan civilians and Afghan and international forces. It is regrettable that 2009 was the worst year since 2001 as concerns the loss of civilian lives. We urge the international forces to continue their efforts to protect civilians during their military operations. We underscore the importance of counter-narcotic activities, well aware that such illicit trafficking is linked to financing terrorist activities.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): Let me join others in thanking the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Alain Le Roy, for his valuable briefing. We appreciate the presence of Ambassador Zahir Tanin at this meeting and thank him for his statement. We welcome the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General in his new assignment. He can count on our support during his assignment.

We welcome Afghanistan's recent progress, as indicated in the benchmark-assessment reports. However, it is clear that the challenges facing the country are enormous, spanning the spheres of security, politics, governance, economic development, corruption and drug trafficking.

On politics and governance, we note President Hâmid Karzai's commitments at the London Conference to ensuring that the irregularities and misconduct observed at the last elections would be avoided in future. The parliamentary elections scheduled for September 2010 should therefore be preceded by thorough and adequate preparations.

Electoral reforms that guarantee the independence and impartiality of the country's electoral bodies and the credibility of the elections themselves should be undertaken.

Serious reconciliation and reintegration efforts are required to consolidate peace efforts in Afghanistan. Thus we welcome the forthcoming national peace jirga of reconciliation that the Government has scheduled for April. We hope it will become a genuine platform for seeking greater political inclusiveness in Afghanistan. It is critically important to guarantee Afghan sovereignty by strengthening the Government's capacity to take ownership of the country's political and development processes.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains precarious and extremely complicated, with terrorists, anti-Government spoiler groups, the narcotics trade and regional warlords creating instability and stalling economic progress. The establishment of a national peace and reintegration trust fund to offer economic alternatives to those who renounce violence and cut ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups is a welcome development. Training, equipping and strengthening Afghan security forces should be an ongoing focus.

In regard to corruption and judicial reform, we welcome the establishment of an anti-corruption unit and the appointment of judges to head the tribunals. We also welcome the reforms called for in the National Justice Programme, as well as the adoption of a draft policy on the integration of formal and traditional mechanisms into the country's judicial system.

On the humanitarian front, there is a need for better coordination of aid and the urgent resettlement of internally displaced persons. We believe that adequate donor funding for the recently launched Humanitarian Action Plan will go a long way to easing the country's humanitarian needs.

We support the outcome of the London Conference. If the commitments made at the Conference are followed through, Afghanistan will be on its way to assuming sovereign responsibility for its security, economic development, social cohesion and regional cooperation. The forthcoming Kabul conference, we hope, will build on the London Conference in order to fast-track the consolidation of Afghanistan as a stable and peaceful country.

We appreciate the role that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has played in managing relief, recovery and reconstruction activities and in holding elections, in addition to providing political and strategic advice for the peace process. At this time of strategic reviews, especially of the outcome of the London Conference, UNAMA has an even greater role in peacemaking, State-building and coordination. We therefore support the Secretary-General's request for the renewal of UNAMA's mandate for another 12 months.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too, of course, are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his comprehensive analysis of the situation in Afghanistan, as well as his presentation of the report on the situation there (S/2010/127). We have listened attentively to the comprehensive statement of the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Mr. Tanin.

We concur with the Secretary-General that the main results of international efforts in Afghanistan should be the effective achievement by the Afghan authorities of sovereignty over the issues of the security and economic development of the country and their gradual assumption of basic responsibility for those areas, with the help of the international community and preserving the coordinating role of the United Nations. It is precisely in that light that we are considering a number of important upcoming events, including the international conference in Kabul — which will be the first high-level event organized by the new Government of Afghanistan — and the parliamentary elections scheduled for September. Those elections should serve to further advance the building of a democratic Afghanistan and its effective Government institutions.

In the Security Council resolution currently being drafted on the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), a great deal of attention has been devoted to the international community's tasks in the area of assisting national reconciliation in Afghanistan. Today's discussion confirms that this topic is on everyone's agenda.

We support the ongoing processes in Afghanistan concerning political settlement and reconciliation — provided, of course, that they do not prejudice the achievement of long-term stability in the country or run counter to relevant Security Council decisions, including the effective implementation of the sanctions regime against the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Dialogue is possible only with those who have laid down their arms, recognized the Government and the Constitution of Afghanistan and severed their links with Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations. It is fundamental that these principles must guide Afghanistan in approaching this very important issue. These fundamental principles should also guide the United Nations Mission in the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

I would like to take this opportunity, as other colleagues have done, to welcome the appointment of the new leadership of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan and to wish Mr. De Mistura and Mr. Kobler every possible success in their activities. They can count on the support of the Russian Federation, including on issues of strengthening, operating and staffing the Mission.

The situation with regard to the production and illegal trafficking of narcotics is particularly alarming. Regrettably, very little light was shed on this subject during today's discussion, although the scale of the drug threat in Afghanistan requires more decisive action, a transition to a new level of international cooperation. We assume that the contingents from the NATO countries in Afghanistan will cooperate even more actively with the Afghan Government on this issue. It is essential that more energetic efforts be made to suppress the flow of precursors, without which heroin production is impossible.

In combating terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime, we must exploit more fully the potential of regional organizations, which have proved their effectiveness in this area. They include the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Strengthening counter-narcotic and counter-terrorism security along Afghanistan's borders with other countries will not only help reduce the financial resources fuelling extremism but will also promote the rapid achievement of stabilization both in Afghanistan and the region as a whole.

Here I recall that the CSTO has significant experience in combating those who traffic in narcotics in Afghanistan. One of the more successful and effective manifestations of practical cooperation in this regard by CSTO member States with a broad range of

international partners is Operation Canal, which has enjoyed the status of an ongoing CSTO regional counter-narcotics operation since September 2008. It is gratifying that the number of participating States has grown every year.

New prospects for cooperation between the United Nations and the CSTO in Afghanistan and a number of other areas have been opened with the signing today in Moscow by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the CSTO of a declaration on cooperation between the secretariats of these organizations. As I already noted, Afghanistan is one of the more promising avenues for cooperation between the two organizations.

Russia supports the efforts of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, carried out on the basis of the Security Council's mandate. Our practical contribution to that effort takes the shape of agreements with NATO on the transit through Russian territory of non-military cargo for foreign military contingents in Afghanistan. Russia has concluded agreements with a number of member States of NATO on the transfer of military cargo through Russian territory.

We share the concern of the United Nations about the substantial increase in the number of civilian victims over this past year. It is quite rightly pointed out, including in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/127), that the activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaida are driving this negative trend. That is yet another demonstration of the fact that the main threat to the security of Afghanistan and the region as a whole remains the terrorist activities of Al-Qaida and the Taliban.

The neutralization of their activities and the stabilization of the security situation as a whole are of fundamental importance in the context of the preparation and conduct of the parliamentary elections in Afghanistan. At the same time, more energetic efforts are required from the international military presence in Afghanistan to prevent civilian victims.

Russia, as Afghanistan's reliable partner, is convinced that it is through joint coordination that we will be able to achieve a sound political settlement in that country, with a lead role being played by the Afghan Government and Afghans themselves, of course. The future of Afghanistan must be determined by Afghans themselves. A possible option for such a solution could be the restoration of Afghanistan's neutrality. The historical evidence itself favours such a solution, provided that it is chosen by the Afghan people.

The Russian Federation will continue to strengthen its cooperation with Afghanistan and with a broad range of international partners for the successful post-conflict reconstruction of the country and the formation of viable State structures, including police, law enforcement and anti-narcotics bodies.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Alain Le Roy for his very useful briefing this morning. I am also grateful to Ambassador Tanin for his statement affirming the very strong determination of his Government to build a stable and democratic Afghanistan.

I would also like to begin by welcoming the appointment of the new Special Representative, Staffan de Mistura, and to acknowledge the valuable contributions of his predecessor, Mr. Eide. The Security Council had a brief meeting with Mr. De Mistura before his departure for his new assignment, and we support his approach, which focuses on a few areas of importance in the coming months, as the political calendar is very heavy and filled with many significant events.

Japan believes that those areas of focus should be, first, stronger aid coordination; secondly, advancing political dialogue; and thirdly, the upcoming parliamentary elections.

With respect to coordination, the London Conference reaffirmed that there is no other international actor that can fulfil the role of the United Nations in leading the coordination of international support. That is especially true at this time, when Afghanistan is in a critical period of transition towards Afghanization, and we need to seek optimal use of international assistance.

On aid coordination, we must be mindful of maintaining a long-term perspective and of ensuring that our efforts serve to promote the leadership and capacity of the Afghan Government. The success of aid coordination hinges upon the willingness of donors to be coordinated. Through the efforts of Mr. Eide, assistance priorities have been identified. The expertise of the proposed senior advisers' group needs to be fully utilized. International donors should make certain that

their efforts are consistent with the goals and priorities set by the Afghan people. As is often repeated, they should also make certain that words are translated into deeds.

Regarding reconciliation and integration efforts, we have to recognize that there is no substitute for military operations in combating those who would resort to violence and obstruct the democratic process. No political dialogue can succeed from a position of weakness, so we understand and pay tribute to the efforts made by members and soldiers of the Afghan security forces and the international forces. At the same time, in order to achieve long-term stability, a political solution must be sought even while military operations are ongoing. We welcome President Karzai's leadership and readiness to seek a dialogue with those who are prepared to renounce violence and respect the values enshrined in the Constitution, as well as to organize a national Peace Jirga.

Japan provides assistance for the efforts of the Afghan Government in its reintegration programme. Japan is especially grateful to those countries, such as Australia, Germany, Greece and Spain, that made pledges at the London Conference to a trust fund to finance this Afghan-led programme. The Afghan authorities are now working on the programme's details, and we very much look forward to the presentation of the full programme in due time. We also welcome the fact that the United Nations is expected to play a role in the reintegration programme. We hope that the Security Council will assign to the United Nations Mission of Assistance in Afghanistan (UNAMA) a proper role in this Afghan-led effort.

The third issue is elections. The ownership of the Afghan authorities must be respected in the conduct of the upcoming parliamentary elections. At the same time, we recognize that the necessary electoral reforms and improvements have to be carried out based on lessons learned from last year's elections. We therefore welcome President Karzai's commitment to ensuring the integrity of this process.

Japan also appreciates the President's readiness to work in close cooperation with the United Nations. The Special Representative is expected to play the role of indispensable interlocutor with the Afghan leadership in conveying the voice and message of the international community. We hope that the Afghan leaders will consult closely with him and that Afghanistan will continue to enjoy full partnership with the international community following the elections.

We agree that UNAMA has to be strengthened in order to meet the high expectations placed upon it. I reiterate that the highest priority must be placed on the security of UNAMA and United Nations staff on the ground. We understand that that an in-depth analysis of United Nations security requirements is under way and we are eagerly awaiting its outcome. We also acknowledge the measures recently taken by the Secretariat to accelerate the recruitment process to fill vacancies. A mission of such high importance needs to be operating at the highest and fullest possible capacity.

I would like to conclude by expressing Japan's appreciation for the work of men and women of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We obviously support the extension of UNAMA's mandate for another 12 months, with the modifications in the priority areas, as recommended by the Secretary-General.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Gabon.

In turn, I would like to thank Mr. Alain Le Roy for his briefing, which was very informative regarding the latest developments on the situation in Afghanistan. My gratitude goes, of course, to Ambassador Tanin for his statement, which, among other things, reflected the Afghan authorities' determination to abide by their commitments in the context of the reconstruction process in their country.

Since 6 January, when the Security Council last debated the situation in Afghanistan (see S/PV.6255), one significant development in the Afghan situation was the organization in London, on 28 January, of the International Conference on Afghanistan at the initiative of the British and Afghan Governments and the Secretary-General. The priorities identified at the Conference were endorsed by the international community and mark a new phase in the process of transferring to Afghan authorities the full management of their country's affairs in the fields of security, good governance and economic and social development. Gabon supports that approach and the commitment of the Afghan authorities to implementing the priorities contained in the plan of action adopted at the London Conference.

During this decisive phase, the efforts of the international community aimed at constructing this country, must be continued and strengthened. I would like to renew our full support for United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for the central role it plays, not only in the coordination of international civilian actions in Afghanistan, but also, more comprehensively, in the process of developing the country. We reiterate our solidarity with the men and women who, within the framework of this Mission, are working in the field, especially given the constant threats to their security.

Gabon also welcomes the efforts by other players in Afghanistan: the European Union, NATO and the United States of America. The future of Afghanistan is being built today, despite the many challenges that continue to threaten the country's political and economic stability. It is thus in our interest to renew our commitment to a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. That is why we support the extension of UNAMA's mandate for a further 12 months.

The next conference, which will be held in Kabul in a few months, will afford the Afghan Government and people a new opportunity to reaffirm their determination to build the future of their country themselves.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Given that the Council has scheduled consultations at 3 p.m., I ask the members of the Council that we complete this meeting, with the hope that it will end by 3 o'clock at the latest. I request all speakers to limit their statements to five minutes to ensure that the Council can end its meeting on time.

I invite the representative of Canada to take the floor.

Mr. McNee (Canada) (*spoke in French*) At the outset, I would like to convey my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his very useful presentation this morning.

As the Secretary-General stresses in his latest report (S/2010/127), the coming months in Afghanistan will be crucial with regard to the transition to a greater Afghan leadership. There has already been considerable progress in that direction during the last three months, with a London conference that was very fruitful and the deployment of much-needed additional forces, especially in the south of Afghanistan. It is now important for the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to live up to their London commitments. It is essential that the United Nations and the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. De Mistura, play a central role as we move toward our common goals. Mr. De Mistoura has one of the most challenging posts in the United Nations. He can count on Canada's full support.

In the past three months many Afghans and members of the international community have lost their lives or been injured. These sacrifices weigh heavily on all of us. Canada, which grieves its own losses, shares the pain of all those who have lost loved ones.

Canada looks to the Security Council to renew the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) so that it remains robust and enables the Mission to continue its work on a whole gamut of essential issues. Canada believes that the new mandate should take into account the development of the situation in Afghanistan. It should provide UNAMA with the direction it needs to continue to play a preponderant role in the coordination of the international effort with regard to Afghan elections. The mandate should also reflect the transition-oriented spirit of the London Conference and authorize the Mission to play fully its political role and its role with regard to coordination of international aid.

Furthermore, UNAMA's human resources also need to be strengthened as a matter of urgency, as its staff numbers and ability to fulfil its core tasks have been severely affected in recent months.

(*spoke in English*)

The London Conference heralded the hope for a new transition phase for Afghanistan. It emphasized to the Afghan public, as well as to the domestic audiences of countries engaged in the reconstruction effort, that the Government of Afghanistan intends to strengthen Afghan leadership in delivering security and support to the well-being of Afghans. However, the challenge is now for us all to follow up on the commitments of the London Conference.

Canada recognizes that the Afghan authorities are progressing along the difficult road of transition in assuming increased responsibility for security. That will require Afghanistan and its international community partners, including UNAMA and NATO, to

work closely together to implement a well-coordinated transition strategy that is based on a careful assessment of conditions on the ground and that provides the Government with the capacity to protect its civilians.

There are many challenges, not least of which is the increased rate of violence caused by insurgents still fighting efforts to establish a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Canada welcomes President Karzai's emphasis on reconciliation and high-level efforts to achieve an inclusive Government. Reconciliation and reintegration will play an important complementary role to stabilization and development. Canada welcomes the holding of an Afghan peace jirga and hopes that it will provide an opportunity for substantive exchange and consultation between different Afghan communities and civil society on reconciliation.

In addition, because increasing violence has also targeted women and girls — especially those in the public sphere — it is essential that women's participation be a central feature of the upcoming peace jirga and Kabul conference as Afghans work together to build consensus on building peace.

The Kabul conference will be an important opportunity for the Afghan Government to present progress and for the international community to lend its voice of support to positive outcomes. Canada is looking to the Afghan Government to demonstrate progress in several areas prior to the conference.

In particular, the London Conference included extensive commitments on electoral reform. Canada strongly supports the need for electoral reforms ahead of the September elections, but we note with concern reports that changes have recently been made to the electoral law that may decrease the independence of the Electoral Complaints Commission. Canada stresses the crucial importance of undertaking all reforms in a transparent manner, in consultation with civil society and Afghan citizens themselves.

The international community also needs to live up to its London commitments to better coordinate its efforts with those of the United Nations and other international partners in support of the priorities of the Afghan Government. Canada urges the United Nations system and the rest of the international community to follow through on the commitments from London to enhance donor coordination under UNAMA's lead and Afghan direction, to make international assistance more efficient and effective until the Government of Afghanistan is able to fully take on this role. It will also be important for the United Nations to work in close cooperation with the new NATO Senior Civilian Representative to ensure a synergy of mandates and efforts.

It is important not to lose sight of the overall vision of an Afghanistan where a democratic Government fulfils all its essential roles, including the delivery of basic services, the provision of effective, transparent and accountable governance, the protection of its citizens, economic development and the protection and promotion of the human rights of all Afghans, including women's rights. The international community and the Government of Afghanistan must continue working together towards making this vision a reality.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Peter Schwaiger, Chargé d'affaires of the European Union delegation to the United Nations.

Mr. Schwaiger: Thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving the floor to the European Union (EU).

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Iceland, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.

Let me join others in expressing our support for the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (S/2010/127) and its recommendations. The EU looks forward to working with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, and wishes him much success in leading UNAMA.

The European Union welcomes the fact that the Secretary-General's report takes on the key priorities agreed at the London Conference, highlighting in particular the transition to the Afghan Government of the responsibility for the security of the country and the need for more Afghan ownership of reconstruction and development efforts. We also note the report's emphasis on the balance between military and civilian efforts in the transition process, and we renew our commitment to building Afghan civilian capacity.

The EU agrees that reconciliation and reintegration are key elements of a sustainable political development in Afghanistan. This process should be Afghan-led and be in conformity with the Constitution and Afghanistan's international commitments, including those on human rights. Reconciliation should not lead to impunity. We welcome the organization of the peace jirga and the recent contacts between leaders in the region aimed at confidence-building. The EU supports the political good offices of UNAMA in that regard. We also stand ready to contribute to a reintegration fund and look forward to the further clarification of its modalities.

Transition is also highly dependent on economic and social development. As a major donor of assistance, the EU welcomes the implementation of the cluster approach intended to accelerate the implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and expects the presentation of concrete plans before the Kabul conference. The EU encourages the establishment of a governance cluster. As pledged at the London Conference, the EU will increase the percentage of its aid allocated to the sectors prioritized in the National Strategy and channelled through the Afghan Government.

Contributions to improving governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and Afghan institution-building are at the heart of our support to Afghanistan. Through our European Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL), for example, we contribute to making the Afghan police more sustainable, effective and respectful of the rule of law and human rights.

The EU notes with concern recent reports of increased restrictions on freedom of expression and continued violations of human rights, as well as the recent publication of the law on public amnesty and national stability. We reiterate the importance of upholding international obligations, as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution.

Given the lessons learned from the monitoring of the 2009 elections, the EU considers electoral reforms to be of crucial importance. Future elections must be credible, inclusive and secure and must reflect the will of the Afghan people. This should be clearly expressed in the resolution to be adopted by the Council next week.

We concur on the need for structural reforms of the electoral process. Short-term reforms are also urgently needed before the parliamentary elections, notably regarding the composition of the two Commissions and the vetting mechanism, also in order to make it possible for the international community to lend effective support to the electoral process.

As this year is the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, we think it would also be appropriate for the Security Council to strengthen the UNAMA resolution as concerns women and gender equality, and for the Secretary-General to report in greater detail on those issues in the future. The Government could be encouraged to accelerate the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan and to strengthen women's participation in public life, including in the upcoming elections and ongoing processes to ensure sustainable peace, stability and reconciliation.

By the adoption of its action plan, the EU has pledged further European contributions to Afghanistan's long-term development and has committed to improved internal EU coordination. The imminent appointment of former Lithuanian Foreign Minister Vygaudas Usackas as our new EU Special Representative and head of our delegation in Kabul not only confirms the strong European commitment to Afghanistan, but should also serve to strengthen common EU action and improve the coordination with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the NATO senior civilian representative. Let me stress in that context that we continue to believe that the roles of UNAMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in civilian coordination are particularly important.

We support the United Nations plans for enhancing coordination among donors and within the United Nations system while ensuring strong Afghan ownership. We understand that UNAMA needs the capacity to deliver on this task; therefore staff recruitment should be addressed as a priority.

Finally, the EU would like to highlight again the importance of the regional dimension as the third pillar of the overall stabilization, together with security and development, as recognized in London.

The EU supports the renewal of the UNAMA mandate for a further 12 months, as recommended by the Secretary-General. With new lead personnel on the ground and the upcoming mandate renewal, the United

Nations and the international community at large can reinvigorate their contributions to Afghanistan's development. The EU hopes that the Government will seize the current opportunities to make real progress towards security and prosperity for the sake of the Afghan people and the stability of the whole region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving Germany the opportunity to participate in this important debate. I would like to join my colleagues and extend my special thanks to the Secretary-General for his report on the situation of Afghanistan (S/2010/127). I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his remarks. We noted with interest and appreciation their remarks on the rather encouraging decisions by President Karzai on fighting corruption and on the preparation of the elections.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union.

My country enjoys a close relationship with Afghanistan and its people. We are a major contributor to the International Security Assistance Force and to development aid and assistance to Afghanistan.

The London Conference has strongly reaffirmed the partnership of the international community with the Afghan people and Government. The upcoming Kabul conference will be an important next step to review implementation and agree on further specific implementation steps, in particular in the field of economic and social development.

The emphasis on Afghan ownership and the concept of transition of responsibility should be adequately reflected in the resolution of the Security Council and the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In the context of this Afghan-led process, we strongly support an extension of the UNAMA mandate as recommended by the Secretary-General.

The parliamentary elections are an important step for a democratic Afghanistan. As requested by President Karzai, the United Nations, including UNAMA, should assist with the electoral process and with the urgently needed work on long-term electoral reform. This assistance should be based on the understanding that all parties concerned will work hard and constructively to overcome the shortcomings of the recent past. In this context, we would like to echo the Secretary-General in urging the Afghan Government to ensure that appointments of members of the relevant Commissions are made in an inclusive and transparent manner and with the broadest possible consultation across the political spectrum, including the opposition and civil society.

The London Conference decided to explore a new approach to promoting peace through dialogue. UNAMA should be ready to assist in that process with good offices upon request, including through the Trust Fund. Again, that approach will prove successful only as an Afghan-led process based on the broad support of the Afghan people. We therefore welcome President Karzai's intention to win political approval for his concept of peace through dialogue from the Peace Jirga later this spring.

The questions, fears and concerns raised by many Afghans with regard to the reconciliation and reintegration approach should be taken seriously and must be reflected in the design of programmes. We support the idea of confidence-building measures, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, and would like to encourage all Council members to constructively support that process in the work of the Council's committees as well.

The overwhelming majority of Afghans want to continue to enjoy their rights as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution, including human rights and women's rights. Those rights should not be bargained away.

With regard to the coordination and effectiveness of aid, we fully share the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report. Indeed, additional emphasis should be put on capacity-building within the Afghan Government. The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) should continue to play a central role in aid coordination. The working methods of the JCMB and its subcommittees can and should be further improved.

Under the umbrella of the United Nations, Germany will continue to contribute substantially to the efforts of the international community in Afghanistan. We will raise to 5,350 the number of German personnel in ISAF missions operating under the mandate of the Security Council. We will double the number of our police trainers on the ground. We

will increase our bilateral development aid to Afghanistan up to a total of $580 million per year. That is in addition to our contribution through the European Union. Finally, we are prepared to support the political process with a substantial contribution to the reintegration trust fund.

With the new UNAMA leadership team appointed, the budget increase approved and the granting of special delegation of recruitment authority to UNAMA, the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly have set important parameters and have paved the way for re-energizing UNAMA on the ground. At the same time, our expectations should remain realistic and focused on key priorities. We warmly welcome the new leadership of Staffan de Mistura and his team and look forward to cooperating closely with them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): The Netherlands fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union. We would like to make a few additional comments on the upcoming renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and on the situation in Afghanistan.

Experience with post-conflict countries teaches us a thing or two about how to jump-start progress. In particular, local authorities themselves must improve stability, governance and the human rights situation. All the while, the international community must empower authorities, and do so in a coordinated manner. That is why we agree with the Secretary-General when he writes in his report (S/2010/127) that 2010 should be the year of transition towards greater Afghan ownership.

The overriding objective of such a transition was of course the main message of the London Conference — a message directed both towards Afghan authorities and the international community. In our view, transition should be defined broadly. Ensuring more Afghan ownership of security by bolstering the Afghan National Army and National Police and by enhancing coordination with the International Security Assistance Force is one side of the coin.

It will be equally important to make tangible progress on the civilian side, in particular at local levels. Key areas I want to mention are, first, significant progress on governance, such as qualified civil servants, bolstered by an increased push in anti-corruption efforts; secondly, election reforms, both in the short and the long terms; and, thirdly, safeguarding women's rights in conformity with international standards. Upcoming opportunities to achieve tangible progress in those areas are the Kabul conference, the Peace Jirga and the elections.

We also agree with the Secretary-General when it comes to UNAMA's focus. It needs to concentrate more on empowering Afghan authorities. In doing so, UNAMA will, in our view, need to take a differentiated approach. In some areas, Afghan ministries are by and large already in charge of donor coordination. In that connection, therefore, UNAMA's role can be limited. In other areas there will be scope for a more pronounced UNAMA role. We believe that UNAMA needs to look carefully into specific areas where it can make a difference when it comes to donor coordination or the United Nations internal coordination — the so-called One United Nations approach. We look forward to the guidance of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on that.

Finally, let me underline that Dutch troops have served with honour in Uruzgan province since 2006. We have made every effort to find the right balance between our civilian and our military efforts and are very grateful for the support and cooperation of our international allies, UNAMA and the Afghan authorities. I wish to emphasize that the Netherlands is and will remain a strong partner for Afghanistan in the years to come.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Herczyński (Poland): I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing, as well as Ambassador Tanin for his remarks today.

As this is the first Security Council debate on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) after his assumption of the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan, I would like to wish Mr. De Mistura every success in his mission and to assure him of the full support of my Government for his efforts. At the same time, I wish to thank former Special Representative Kai Eide for his commitment and leadership during the past two difficult years.

Poland aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of the European Union. I would like to make just a few additional comments from the Polish perspective.

The period since the last Security Council debate on Afghanistan, at the beginning of this year, was indeed an eventful one. The London Conference was the opening of the next stage of transferring greater responsibility for the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan to Afghan authorities. While the international community still stands ready to be actively engaged in Afghanistan, it is important to stress the need for greater Afghan leadership. In that context, we especially welcome the commitments made by President Karzai to undertake more vigorous actions in such areas as security, State-building, the fight against corruption, and counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics efforts. We look forward to the conference in Kabul later this year to be hosted by the Afghan Government, which will serve as a follow-up meeting to the commitments made in London.

Poland closely follows the Afghan-led process of reconciliation and reintegration. The success of the peace and reintegration programme outlined by President Karzai during the London meeting will need broad support, as the Secretary-General rightly observes in his report (S/2010/127). In that context, let me recall the proposal made in London by Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski about the readiness of Poland to host a series of meetings that might be helpful in overcoming the lack of mutual trust between Afghans. Poland stands ready to share its own experience in the area of successful political transition.

We are concerned by the difficult security situation in Afghanistan. We particularly deeply regret the increase in the number of civilian casualties as compared with previous periods. In that context, I would like to stress what the Secretary-General's report clearly states, namely, that civilian deaths attributed to anti-Government elements rose by 41 per cent compared to 2008, whereas measures taken by international forces to reduce civilian causalities contributed to their reduction by 28 per cent.

In the circumstances of a difficult security situation, the intensification of training of Afghan national security forces –army and police — is crucial and urgent. With this in mind, Poland will increase the number of its training and mentoring teams from 6 to 16, so that almost 20 per cent of our troops present in Afghanistan will be directly involved in the improvement of the operational capacity of the Afghan army and police.

Turning to UNAMA, it is impossible not to mention the worrying picture presented by the Secretary-General in relation to the current vacancy rate, which has now increased to 42 per cent. Speeding up the recruitment process, boosting the morale of the United Nations personnel, and increasing enticements are now essential if the Mission is to effectively fulfil its complex mandate. At the same time, we are highly aware of the difficult security circumstances that the personnel of UNAMA are faced with. I would like to underline my Government's full support for all the efforts aimed at the enhancement of the security of United Nations staff.

International engagement in Afghanistan will be successful only if we act together on the military and development fronts. In this context, let me stress that the appointments of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the new European Union Special Representative and the new NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan serve as an excellent opportunity to establish effective ways of cooperation between these three major international organizations involved in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that my country's involvement in Afghanistan follows from our deep sense of responsibility for the situation in that country, which still poses a threat to international peace and security. We hope that the decision of the Government of Poland to increase the number of Polish troops to 3,000 — 2,600 military personnel in Afghanistan and an additional 400-troop reserve deployable in case of emergency — will contribute significantly to the building of peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Norway.

Mr. Wetland (Norway): Afghanization is increasingly the mantra of our support for Afghanistan. Rather than being a euphemism for exit, it underlines the importance of an Afghan-led process that is responsible, inclusive and transparent and promotes the fundamental rights of the Afghan people. This is of great importance for three of the key issues being raised in today's debate: the follow-up after the

London Conference, President Karzai's political agenda, and the issue of reconciliation. Furthermore, it has implications for what we should expect from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in Afghanistan.

First, we join other speakers in welcoming the conclusions of the London Conference and the stated need for greater Afghan leadership, supported by the international community under the leadership of the United Nations. At the Kabul conference, we must be clear about our is readiness to transfer authorities to Afghan ownership. And the Afghan Government should present concrete national programmes with tangible planning. Today, Norway provides almost 60 per cent of our $140-million annual aid through Afghan budgets and programmes. We support UNAMA plans for enhancing civilian coordination while ensuring strong Afghan leadership.

Secondly, we should expect real progress from President Karzai and his Government when it comes to reform and delivery on the pledges made in London regarding good governance, measures against corruption, improvement of the electoral laws, and other commitments relating to reform of the political system. The Afghan authorities must also move forward with reform in a way that addresses the rights and interests of women; they must bring civil society on board and they need to address adequately the national call for justice, including transitional justice.

Norway is particularly concerned about laws and decrees with far-reaching implications that recently been adopted without a wide and inclusive consultation process. Both the process and the content of the adopted amnesty law give reasons for grave concerns. Amnesty is one way of healing the wounds of the country, but those wounds cannot be healed if there is no accountability and if impunity prevails.

It is also important that the recent amendments of the election law do not hamper constructive efforts to reform the Afghan electoral institutions by ensuring enhanced consultations across the political spectrum and a credible and transparent process. The election process towards September must be conducted in a way that is seen as a step forward in comparison with the 2009 election. UNAMA should be allowed to play an active role in this regard.

Thirdly, a process of reintegration and reconciliation is necessary to achieving political stability and peace in Afghanistan. In London, we agreed to the broad principles of this process. Yet, we see the complexities when it comes to both the design and the implementation of a robust reconciliation process. The upcoming advisory Peace Jirga announced by Karzai is an important step in the building consensus to back such a reconciliation process. The process must be shaped and led by Afghan authorities, but only if there is buy-in to the process from representatives of Afghan society can we avoid national polarization and reach sustainable national reconciliation. One cannot build a country on just 50 per cent of the population. Women — and what women represent — must be taken into account, as agreed upon by this Council in the resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1888 (2009). Furthermore, the involvement of neighbouring countries cannot be neglected.

UNAMA should play a facilitating role, using its good offices and confidence-building measures in assisting with the advisory Peace Jirga and the larger peace and reconciliation process. UNAMA should also encourage closer regional cooperation economically, socially and politically.

We welcome the extension of UNAMA's mandate and the amendments proposed in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2010/127). It is important to protect what has been UNAMA's strengths: its legitimacy, political outreach, field presence and status as guarantor for the integrity of the overall political process. We need UNAMA to ensure unity among the international partners, but we also need it to position itself both close enough to the Government and far enough to be able to speak out and to voice the concerns of the Afghan society.

Norway would like to welcome the appointment of the seasoned diplomat Staffan De Mistura as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and look forward to cooperate with him and his new team in Kabul. We pay tribute to the men and women of UNAMA and will continue to support their vital mission, especially with regard to their budget, recruitment and security. Without certain resources, UNAMA will not be able to implement its mandate or meet our expectations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): May I express appreciation for the successful Gabonese presidency of

the Security Council. I should also like to thank Alain Le Roy for presenting the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/127) and my dear friend Zahir Tanin, who sits so patiently through every meeting, hearing everything that can possibly be said around this table.

This is a timely debate on Afghanistan, with the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Of course, that calls for a renewal of everything else that we intend to express here, but, at the same time, we cannot forget that, enmeshed in that cruel cyclone that has hit the world, the region has suffered along with Afghanistan and, sadly, the situation has affected its neighbours, especially Pakistan. Yet, I endorse and express complete support for the international and regional efforts for stability and peace.

The London Conference has, thankfully, been taken over by past masters, who perhaps might produce more expected results acceptable to a wider audience. I hope that what we call Afghan ownership will become more apparent if not for the security of the world, then certainly for the security of Afghanistan and its people. I remember Peter Galbraith when I speak of the formation of the Electoral Complaints Commission, and the technical assistance of UNAMA will further help to improve the electoral process. We are confident that the parliamentary elections this year will produce more binding results.

Pakistan supports the reconciliation and reintegration process, and I believe that anyone willing to lay down arms or to consider the possibility should be considered wholly without recrimination. However, as suggested by the Secretary-General, we must be very careful not to over-militarize the peace process, and I picked that specifically from his report. The civilian component of the strategy should be at the forefront, and the military component should slowly — and that will be the litmus test of our progress and success — support the overall efforts. At the same time, the international community must accept and realize that there is a desire not just to build what is physically visible, but also to promote the Afghan national character to one that can support itself with its head held high.

We agree with the Secretary-General's observation that there can be no sovereignty without capacity and responsibility. I think that the international community understands that, and is moving towards increasing capacity and assisting with more responsibility. With great pleasure, I announce that, in the recent meetings between President Karzai and President Zardari in Islamabad, we have further aided that process by increasing responsibility through offering 2,000 university scholarships in Pakistan to Afghans free of cost, and that, to increase capacity, we have offered to train military and police forces in large numbers in our institutions in Pakistan. I think that this will help further the process and accelerate it towards more sovereign Afghan action.

I would not like to forget Mr. Kai Eide. Yet, I would like to congratulate Mr. Staffan de Mistura on his appointment as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan at this critical juncture. UNAMA must play a pivotal role in supporting and strengthening the capacity of the Afghan Government to confront the enormous challenges before it. UNAMA's supportive disposition — and I stress supportive — would be acceptable to the Afghan people.

We attach high priority to our close friendship with Afghanistan, and I think that the joint declaration signed in Islamabad on 11 March signifies that. I believe that Pakistan remains host to over 3 million Afghans. That gesture, despite our own economic woes, remains close to our heart, and we carry on in whatever way possible.

Pakistan supports regional efforts for stability and peace in Afghanistan, and I think that the reflection of our desire to make the best possible use of a regional approach to peace, security and economic progress was self-evident at the fourth trilateral summit of Pakistan, Turkey and Afghanistan in Istanbul. We are also looking forward to the joint jirga, as we call it, which is the convergence of elders throughout our and the Afghan areas hosting the Pashtun race, some time at the end of April, as well as to the Kabul conference. These and other actions taken by us, we hope, will produce substantial results. And we continue to pursue such actions.

What is the international community to do about it? What is happening to that beautiful country — a paradise lost, to which brave people, including Ambassador Tanin here, return, giving up everything in life to be a part of a process that rebuilds their beloved land? If it is a paradise lost, I think that the first important action is for the international community to

quash the various rumours of pull-outs and early departure, as they are dampening and hurting the process of peace in Afghanistan. Much like Satan thrown out from the realms of paradise, the international community will have to clench its fist in defiance and, as Milton says, speak and show the unconquerable will of the international community. I believe that to leave Afghanistan alone with those national challenges is not, in my mind, sound policy.

We must also make a very hard decision. Only 30 to 35 per cent of all aid filters down to those for whom it was originally sent. The number is significantly low and does not reflect the progress that will be needed for Afghanistan.

On a lighter note, as I come towards my conclusion, what is it that we desire from the Afghan Government? The answer should be a partnership. Well, if that is a partnership, I wonder how many around this table can pontificate to their wives every morning on how the partnership should be run. Very few, I would guess. I believe we need to be more concerned and sensitive to the Afghan Government's efforts and to promote that relationship. Let them be partners and not have to hear merely what is poured into their ears over long periods of time.

In the end, we congratulate the hardy men who are our partners in Afghanistan and the efforts they are making today. Peace and security in Afghanistan are the desire and dream of the Pakistani people. Affiliation between the people of two countries is based on historical, cultural and social ties. Stability and progress in Afghanistan will have positive implications for the security situation in Pakistan. We also call on the international community to remain steadfast in its commitment to Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Australia.

Mr. Windsor (Australia): Australia supports Security Council renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and welcomes the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to Afghanistan and to international efforts in support of the Afghan Government and people.

In view of the hour and to facilitate the work of the Council, I will summarize my statement, which will be distributed.

We are grateful for the briefing by the Under-Secretary-General and for the statement by the Ambassador of Afghanistan. We wish him and his mission all the best in advance of Nowruz.

We believe that the draft resolution before the Council should build on the substantial outcomes of the London Conference and reinforce the central role the United Nations has to play in supporting the security, stability and development of Afghanistan. The draft resolution should endorse further the concept of constructive partnership between the Afghan Government and the international community and the shared plan of phased transition to Afghan leadership and ownership of security, governance and development for the Afghan people — the key outcome of London.

A renewed UNAMA mandate should also address the call for a better coordinated and civilian effort in Afghanistan to improve the impact of international civilian assistance, and the need for a more rigorous alignment of international assistance with clearly identified Afghan priorities, with UNAMA in the primary coordinating role in these activities.

Australia does not underestimate the significant and interrelated security, political and economic challenges facing the Afghan people and ourselves. There is a real need for much greater focus on the accountability of the Afghan Government. President Karzai has made commitments to improving governance, pursuing electoral reform, taking effective anti-corruption and anti-narcotics measures and creating social and economic opportunities for all Afghans. Australia will work in cooperation with UNAMA and the rest of our partners to help the President and his Government deliver on these commitments.

Parliamentary elections, of course, will be a crucial test of progress by the Afghan Government in improving electoral and political processes. In this regard, we encourage the Afghan Government to appoint independent and reputable electoral commissioners so that the process can be acceptable to all Afghans, including opposition parties. UNAMA will have an important role in supporting the preparations for and conduct of these elections, and we expect — in fact, as we have heard today — that the Afghan Government will work closely with the United Nations, not only to learn from the lessons of 2009, but also to

lay the ground work for elections in future. We appreciate the words of Ambassador Tanin this morning with regard to transparency and credibility in those future elections.

Australia's own approach to Afghanistan recognizes the importance of comprehensive civil-military engagement in capacity-building and development assistance, in concert with sustained efforts to strengthen security by training the Afghan army, and the details of that are set out in our statement. We firmly believe that an Afghan Government-led and -owned process of political reconciliation and reintegration is required to draw back into the fold those people who lay down their arms, eschew violence, sever links with Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups, and accept the Afghan Constitution. For this reason, as the Japanese Ambassador mentioned, we will contribute A$25 million to the peace and reintegration trust fund, subject to Australia having an appropriate role in the administration and governance oversight of the fund.

In conclusion, we support the lead role of UNAMA in guiding the Afghan Government through the implementation of international assistance initiatives. We look forward to working with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and welcome UNAMA and the International Security Assistance Force working together on enhanced civilian coordination structures.

I also take this moment to acknowledge again the dedication and sacrifice of UNAMA personnel operating in the challenging environment of Afghanistan. We support all efforts to meet the security needs of UNAMA staff there so that it may continue to fulfil its indispensable role throughout the country.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Ragaglini (Italy): Allow me to join previous speakers in thanking Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his briefing, and to express my appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, for his important remarks. Let me also congratulate the new Special Representative for Afghanistan, Staffan de Mistura, on his recent assumption of his duties. Italy looks forward to working with him and wishes him success in his challenging mission.

Italy fully supports the statement delivered by the Chargé d'affaires of the European Union delegation. I would like to add just a few remarks, drawing on our national experience and our significant civil and military commitment to Afghanistan.

In London in January, the international community and the Afghan Government agreed to begin a new phase in their partnership and to renew their commitment to implementing a reform-oriented nation-building agenda, as first launched by President Karzai in his 19 November inaugural speech. The military operations are no doubt essential to creating the necessary security conditions that will allow the Afghan economy to grow, create new job opportunities and enable civil society to revive itself. They cannot, however, solve the problems of Afghanistan by themselves, nor do they represent a durable solution to the conflict. What is needed is a comprehensive approach.

Thus, the London Conference confirmed the central role of the civilian efforts in the overall international strategy for the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and shifted the focus more towards reinforcing the political, institutional and development processes and towards a transition aimed at making Afghan sovereignty real. Coordination mechanisms have been better defined, while a new phase has been inaugurated for the progressive handover of responsibilities to the Afghan counterparts in the fields of security, governance, anti-corruption and economic and social development.

It is now imperative that we all work with the Afghan Government to achieve real progress and define clear and concrete actions in view of the important events taking place in the upcoming months: the Peace Jirga in April, the Kabul conference in June, a Security Council mission and, most important, the parliamentary elections scheduled for September. We also look forward to the implementation of the cluster approach, which should allow the various branches of the Afghan Government and Administration to fine-tune their priorities, manage international funds more efficiently and better coordinate the implementation of international programmes.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) must continue to lead and guide international civilian assistance; hence the need to strengthen its resources and structures in order to

enable it to fulfil its mandate. International donors must also do their part, commit to the coordination efforts, and acknowledge the respective roles of UNAMA and the Afghan authorities. The Secretary-General notes in his report that there has been "a marginal increase in donor alignment and increased contributions to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund as a result of intense coordination efforts" (*S/2010/127, para. 18*). While this is true, the current situation is far from the goal set in London to increase contributions made through the Afghan budget to 50 per cent of the total contributions to Afghanistan over the next two years. I confirm Italy's readiness to continue do its part.

We also subscribe to and are ready to make a concrete contribution to the proposal of the Secretary-General to set up an advisory group on donor coordination and aid effectiveness. We are also eager to work with the United Nations and other international partners to find an urgent solution to the alarming vacancy rate, which poses serious constraints on UNAMA's operability, and on the need to also expand its presence in the Afghan provinces. At the national level, we are encouraging candidacies for specific posts within the Mission.

We support the renewal of UNAMA's mandate for a further 12 months and believe that the draft resolution being prepared by the Security Council should be centred on the notion of transition, as defined in London. It should set clear priorities for the United Nations Mission and call upon the Afghan Government to fulfil its commitments.

Clarity is also particularly important with regard to UNAMA's involvement in the forthcoming elections. We strongly believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in assisting the Afghan Government in the preparation of credible, safe and secure legislative elections. The lessons learned from the 2009 elections must be taken into account so as to deliver improvements to the electoral process of 2010 and beyond.

We therefore encourage Afghan authorities to follow through with the commitments made. The time they have at their disposal should allow them to correct some of the deficiencies, omissions and discrepancies in the electoral law and to overcome the technical difficulties for the organization of the elections. This is particularly important with regard to the appointment of the members of the Independent Election Commission, the Electoral Complaints Commission and the media commission, as well as the definition of their mandates. It is also important for voter registration, vetting procedures for candidates — which is a much bigger task for parliamentary elections than for last year's presidential election — and the recruitment and training of personnel to be employed at the provincial level and in the polling stations.

We believe that UNAMA, with the consistent support of the international community, can take on a decisive role in helping to overcome these hurdles, suggesting pragmatic solutions and facilitating any necessary compromises.

UNAMA action should support regional cooperation — which, alongside security and development, was enshrined in London as the third pillar of the overall stabilization strategy — thus embracing the approach set out at last year's G-8 ministerial meeting in Trieste.

We also support UNAMA's political good offices to sustain reintegration and reconciliation programmes, as long as they are Afghan-led and transparent and are carried out in a manner respectful of the Afghan Constitution and with the support of the international community. We stand ready to contribute to the reintegration trust fund, as long as financing mechanisms will allow for some control over the use of the resources.

In conclusion, 2010 will be a decisive year in our overall efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. The events and processes that will take place in the upcoming months will be crucial in that respect. It is imperative, as the Secretary-General underlines in his report, that they be managed in such a way as to ensure that they reinforce, rather than undermine, each other. In fact, if well managed, these events can form the structure of a transition to greater Afghan leadership.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): I trust that, in the interests of time, Ambassador Tanin and the others who have reported to the Council will excuse me if I take the thanks as read.

There is no doubt that today's Afghan Government still needs strong support to meet the challenges it faces, or that it needs an international

community prepared to provide that support. We are therefore pleased at the significant developments of the last quarter. I intend to focus on just three of those.

New Zealand supports President Karzai's efforts to build a new and peaceful Afghanistan. We welcome the priority that the President placed on these three areas at the London Conference in January and his personal commitment to making progress in them in an integrated manner. Fighting corruption is key to improving governance, just as failing to do so would greatly impede economic development.

Similarly, improving security is a multifaceted challenge that requires not only building up the national forces, but also providing the conditions for reconcilable insurgents to return to the mainstream and for countries in the region to play a constructive role.

In that regard, we and other contributors, the people of Afghanistan who supported democracy in last year's elections and the military and civilians who risk their lives are all entitled to expect, and to see, urgent progress on improving governance, without which our combined efforts to achieve peace will falter. A functioning and credible executive is essential to effective governance. New Zealand urges both the Afghan Parliament and President Karzai to work together to form a full and final Cabinet as a matter of priority.

We also look forward to the necessary steps being taken ahead of parliamentary elections in September to ensure that electoral institutions are transparent, impartial and independent.

As the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/127) makes clear, corruption is corrosive. Corruption in Afghanistan is corrosive: it hinders stability and it inhibits growth. At the London Conference, we joined those welcoming the Government's commitment to fight corruption, address its causes and develop benchmarks by which to measure progress.

We are pleased in particular to see the formation of the anti-corruption unit and the appointment of judges to an anti-corruption tribunal. We look forward to further measures being implemented before the Kabul Conference. In passing, we are pleased that that Conference can take place in Afghanistan, and not elsewhere.

New Zealand welcomes President Karzai's plans to promote reconciliation. We agree that this will need broad national support. However, we urge the Government to ensure that reconciliation is not achieved at the expense of human rights.

On economic development, we are pleased to see efforts to prioritize and cluster components of the National Development Strategy. New Zealand is in the process of aligning its own development support to prioritize agriculture and rural development. We welcome the current efforts to simplify the international approach to delivering development assistance. We support the central role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in coordinating that assistance to support Government priorities identified in the National Development Strategy. We welcome UNAMA's revised mandate in that regard.

On security, New Zealand, along with other International Security Assistance Force partners, is committed to providing a clearly defined pathway for transferring primary responsibility for security to the National Security Forces, thus allowing international forces to draw down and for a shift in the focus of international efforts to building civilian capacities. Like other contributors, ideally we would like our troops home as soon as possible. But the objective is to leave the country secure and confident in its ability to meet the security and development needs of its people.

In Bamyan province, New Zealand has already committed to the progressive transfer of security responsibility from the New Zealand-led provincial reconstruction team (PRT) to Afghan authorities. We aim to have an ambassador on the ground in Kabul soon and to move leadership of the PRT to a civilian role, to ensure better support for coherent civilian and development assistance efforts.

As many have said here today and elsewhere, this is a critical moment for Afghanistan. As always, time is short. That said, Afghanistan needs time and space to rebuild. New Zealand is committed to playing its part in providing those opportunities. But there must be measurable progress on all fronts, including governance, economic development and security, as all are interrelated. New Zealand fully respects the fact that it is the sovereign right of the Government and people of Afghanistan to decide how best to address these challenges and deliver those outcomes. But everyone with a stake in Afghanistan now knows that

failure to act is not an option. The risks of such a failure are simply too high.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to thank you for scheduling today's debate on the situation in Afghanistan and the United Nations Assistance Mission in that country. This is of immediate and abiding interest for India, both as a close neighbour and a civilizational partner of Afghanistan.

We are grateful for the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/127) and are appreciative of the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy. We are also thankful to Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for his statement. We welcome the appointment of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura. He has taken over at a particularly challenging time for the United Nations in Afghanistan, with major concerns, even regarding the security of its personnel, requiring to be addressed.

The international approach to Afghanistan in recent months, in particular the London Conference in January, has focused on security, reintegration, development, governance and regional and international cooperation. The forthcoming political processes — the Loya Jirga, the Kabul conference and the parliamentary elections scheduled later this year — will be important milestones in this context. If these are processes to be enduring, Afghan ownership should go hand in hand with Afghan leadership. With respect to both the military and the civilian efforts, while working complementarily and within indicative timelines, the international community must reaffirm its long-term commitment to stability, peace and development in Afghanistan.

Without tangible and sustained improvements on the security front, it would be too much to expect the Afghan Government to exercise greater responsibility. Indeed, improved security could create an enabling environment for accelerated progress on development and governance issues. This is also critical in expanding the footprint of the Afghan Government and ensuring the greater ownership of these processes by the Afghan people.

The latest report of the Secretary-General highlights the fact that the deterioration in the security situation has continued, with 2009 being the most volatile year since the fall of Taliban in 2001. Despite the reinforced presence of the International Security Assistance Force, asymmetric warfare and complex terrorist attacks have increased. There has been a spate of such recent attacks all over Afghanistan, including in urban centres such as Kabul and Kandahar, that have killed innocent Afghans and foreigners, including Indian experts and workers involved in our development partnership. Such acts of terrorism will not deter us, but will only strengthen our resolve to fulfil our pledges towards the reconstruction of Afghanistan and to cement our traditional friendship with the Afghan people.

In the interest of stabilizing the security situation in Afghanistan, it is essential to ensure that support, sustenance and sanctuaries for terrorist organizations be ended forthwith. The security and stabilization of Afghanistan will remain a distant goal unless we are able to isolate and root out the syndicate of terrorism, which includes elements of Al-Qaida, the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and other terrorist and extremist groups operating from within and outside Afghanistan's borders.

Therefore, in addition to the strengthening of the International Security Assistance Force, it is critical that the Afghan National Security Forces be enlarged and developed in a professional manner and at a much faster pace. They should be provided with appropriate resources, combat equipment, enablers and training before considering any plan for a phased, province-by-province transition to Afghan-led security. We welcome the expansion of the capacities of the Afghan National Security Forces and also appreciate the efforts being made by third countries to strengthen the capacities of those Forces.

Against the backdrop of today's worrying security situation, the issue of reintegration should be tackled with prudence, the benefit of hindsight, foresight and caution. We believe that any integration process in Afghanistan should be Afghan-led and include only those who abjure violence, give up armed struggle and terrorism, and are willing to abide by the values of democracy, pluralism, human rights and women's rights, as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution. The process must be inclusive and transparent.

A sustainable strategy for the stabilization of Afghanistan must focus on development and governance issues. In order to strengthen governance and institution-building, priority should be accorded to building adequate capacity to deliver on development objectives.

Presently, the overall civilian approach remains fragmented. The Secretary-General's report strikingly points out that, even after the last eight years of engagement in Afghanistan, 80 per cent of international community assistance still bypasses the Afghan Government and is not closely aligned with Government priorities. This trend must be reversed and our efforts must concentrate on the strengthening of Afghan Government institutions, particularly through the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board which has endorsed new initiatives in agriculture, private sector development, technical assistance and capacity-building.

India's efforts towards the stabilization of Afghanistan have focused on socio-economic development. The principal objective of India's development partnership, covering the entire country and straddling all sectors of development, is to build indigenous Afghan capacities and institutions. This will enable an effective State system to improve the delivery of goods and services to the Afghan people and contribute to stability.

Our assistance, now over $1.3 billion, is spread over a large number of provinces in Afghanistan. In addition to several small and medium development projects, India has built the Zaranj-Delaram road and the power transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul. We are also constructing Afghanistan's new Parliament building, a symbol of our common commitment to pluralism and democracy. At the recent London Conference, we announced new initiatives in the agriculture sector and in institutional capacity-building.

Perseverance and tenacity are critical to effectively confronting the challenges facing Afghanistan and to ushering peace and security into the region. There are no quick-fix solutions and it is imperative that the international community remain engaged in Afghanistan in a sustained manner, providing assistance on the security side and development and nation-building support for as long as it takes. We support the good work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

We need to be clear that a stable Afghanistan is in the interests not only of all of us in the neighbourhood, but for the international community as a whole.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.